

SEVEN DAYS

FREE

GOV CONNECTION

Heintz on the might-wannabes
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CASHING OUT?

Vermont mulls the pros and cons of privatizing state liquor sales

BY BEN PICARD



VERMONT'S INDEPENDENT VOICE JUNE 12-17 2013 VOL. 22 NO. 40 SEVEN DAYS FREE



NATURAL NICHE

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Elhan de Seife goes Off Trail



MUSICAL STAPLES

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The gospel according to Mavis



SUNDAY SUPPERS

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Fun Home Wins Big at the Tonys

Vermont Governor Alison Fiske told the "New York Times" that David Saxe told her last Sunday night at the Tony Awards when Fiske Award took home two awards, including Best Musical. The production followed on her 2008 graphic memoir *Fare Home: A Family Story*, in which a girl grows up in her family's home of choice in small town Pennsylvania, discovers that it is indeed Pennsylvania, but that her grandfather father comes out, and the personality conflicts inside her evolve in front of us.

Steven Spielberg. The film is carefully crafted but only gets neither the backdrop nor the musical mileage this story for cheap has given the other 17. *Salem* might, I've speculated with some delightfully upstart and catchytunes-y is a thoughtful, profound and intensely story... unlike many my Broadway shows. Seven Days coeditor Pamela Peterson and executive producer Tim Sallinger went to New York to see *Far* where in April. Peterson was in *Mount* for Seven Days and on the *Live Outloud* track. Sallinger made it the subject of an episode of *Quentin* Vermont.

Bochdalek's compelling writing and drawing have converted her memoirs and as combed nonstop into the manner lingers on as well as the end of your lap. We Last year Bochdalek won a MacArthur Fellowship for "genial" award. And also the Fox of this posthumous came Low Stan and Jerome, "Bochdalek who three-

Turned Bechtle's words into a brilliant, moving and rare three-winding stage experience.

"The music punned the emotional depths of my father's story in a very powerful yet very subtle way," he observed. "Signs of the World, the song in which my father steps in front of the truck, is just astonishing."

Kravis and I went over *Things*, too. The jury for original score and Kravis was the best book, aka *Boyz n the City*. Clevins, who plays Albert's father, won the best acting actor in a musical. Sam Gold won for direction. Fun Movie had been nominated for 10 weeks, including 8 of the weeks except the two late boys were played Albert's brothers. This ceremony in Memphis, TN, was the

Sydney's own Institute Emily Skaggs had about 180-210 visitors. But they, along with a jolly Madras playgroup the mothers "were up against some heavy hitters" she says.

Richard, whose own mother is also now deceased, has joined another family with the five Adams, now "I feel incredibly lucky to have this particular bed doing the job — it is one is a bliss," she said. "They are all really respectful about the fact that they're putting my real people, and they seem to find their own, clean environments in the sleep."

Tickets for the just-got-for-the-Alamo at New York City's Circle in the Square Theatre.



facing facts



LAURENCE B. BOWEN

Two kilometers from an Allwoodock point — using powertrails. They left behind a rocky note with a valley from walking. The road is a road.



Discussion

The Derby Lane house for sale was real, but a Craigslist ad for it was a scam. Almost somebody got hurt — and had their credit ruined. *—Gawd!*



DAVID L. PETERSON

More than 200 drivers descended on Vermont last Wednesday for the annual snowmobile rally. They found Londonderry



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24



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proved successful in dramatically reducing domestic violence in Baltimore, Dallas and other places. Vermont should adopt laws modeled after Oregon law, where domestic violence victims have a statutory right to take leave from work after being assaulted. Oregon law also allows prosecution to charge a felony in any domestic assault occurring in front of a child. Regarding the shortage of domestic violence shelters, policy makers should consider vouchers for preapproved rooms in private residences. Yes, this presents risks, so does placing juveniles in therapeutic foster homes, which has been done successfully for decades. Finally, law enforcement should be awarded to grant courts discretion to approve substitution in domestic violence cases, where the restitution could support housing for victims.

Ben Lema
DUBLINGTON

Lema is a former deputy state's attorney with the Lamoille County Special Investigation Unit.

ADDRESSING ABUSE

Thanks for this excellent article "Shelter Biker: Domestic Abuse Survivors Wind Up in Deadly Motocycle," June 21. Two things popped out for me, which I wanted to mention.

One: Just the Department for Children and Families does not have any idea how many child restraints they give out or are used. That seems worrisome.

Second: that is, as usual, the abused are forced to try to get help after the abuse. The whole focus of the article — and the work of the communities of caregivers — remains on punishing the wounded instead of addressing the cause of their suffering and injury.

I don't think Seven Days for this — just keep stating that we aren't teaching the men who are OK. We're just trying, without success, to bandage up the women later. Right, or not?

Steve Ames
CLARENDON

TESTING THE LIMITS

[Re "Going it Alone, and Female, in the Woods" June 21.] Truth be told, Rusty Banning's parents were more than just frantic when the first went for a solo "adventure" in the woods behind our house. It had snowed, she was about 6 or 7, and the sun was going down. Following her trail in the dancing light, I could see where she had veered off her path to investigate things like deer scat and wood-licking tree stumps. I grew more

and more alarmed the further I ran while asleep in the snow, hearing no response to my yelling her name at the top of my lungs. Thankfully, this parent's worst nightmare had a happy ending, but we learned an important lesson. Encourage your children to test the woods limits, just make sure they don't go on their own testing years. Happy trails, Rusty!

Ben Joe Banning
LYNDENVILLE

ARMED AND ADVENTUROUS

[Re "Going it Alone, and Female, in the Woods" June 21.] I firmly believe that, if you are taking these long hikes during the spring season, especially in Vermont, you should carry no less than a .45 ACP handgun or rifle. There are more dangers in the Vermont woods than sturdy people. What happens if you cross a moose bear with cub? She's not likely to walk away unless that big bang scares her or, in a worst-case situation, doesn't put her down upon an attack.

Joseph Crawford
NORTH BENNINGTON

SHOVE OFF, SHUMLIN

[Re "Game," "Punk Games to Go" June 21.] I sure hope the gov is challenged by someone... anyone. Time for him to leave! I can't afford to stay here now. Another term will bankrupt us all.

Jessie Longtin
BACON

CORRECTION

A food news item in last week's *State* (Dishes column) misidentified the address of a Whitefish Bay restaurant, which has just opened a second location in Stowe. The two restaurants are co-owned by Russ Handy Jr., Dan Johnson and Patrick Stewart.

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VIDEO SERIES



Unrelated activity



STUCK IN VERMONT: The first ever Senior
Prom was held last Saturday at the National
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①

WEDNESDAY 11 STAR POWER

Benjamin Booker is in his mad twenties, but he has the musical chops of a performer twice his age. In 2013, the singer-songwriter and guitarist appeared at both Lollapalooza and the Newport Folk Festival, creating a buzz among critics and audiences. This praise culminated into his 2014 self-titled debut, a hard-hitting, bluesy mix of punk, rock and soul.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 50

②

FRIDAY 12 & SATURDAY 13 Something Old, Something New

Benjamin Booker is the subject of the **Children Exchange**. The biennial event has grown exponentially since its humble beginnings in a living room. Today, hundreds of donated garments fill shelves inside of the former Southwest Creek school in Washington, Town Center. Proceeds from this Children's Day event benefit the Vermont Children's Fund.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 50

③

SUNDAY 14

Class Reunion

In 1984, seven local jazz musicians began playing a weekly gig in Swanton's Bedford Warehouse. Over time, with late, the roster included Dave Sengler, Paul Adkins and other heavy hitters who entertained audiences every Friday night for 25 years straight. Together for the first time since 1987, the **Swanton Jazz Band** hits up Club Monochrome as part of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 50

④

SUNDAY 14

Rainbow Bright

Flag Day gets a healthy dose of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple at the **Valley You See First Flag Day Celebration**. Members of the Lamoille community gather on the Main Street Valley, where they catch up at family-friendly picnic and strolling ceremony. Proceeds from the bazaar benefit the Mt. Mansfield Center of Vermont.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 50

⑤

SUNDAY 14

Summer School

Calling all nature lovers! The **EcotribeVermont Day** celebrates the great outdoors with hiking, bird walks, gardening and more — think worm composting, do-it-yourself-crafts. Hosted by the Vermont Valley Foodshed, this month-on approach to environmental education uses family-friendly activities to teach attendees about local wildlands and the principles of citizen science.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 50

⑥

THURSDAY 11

Loca for Locavore

Valley Food, its sister company, food farming and promotion close to home is on board. This Saturday, share your own crafts, art, music, kids activities and local fare with informative workshops on value power, conscious investing and other topics. Featuring a wine and vinegar workshop, get a complete sensory skills index, or pass away people.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING ON PAGE 50

⑦

WEDNESDAY 10

Leapin' Lizards

They're back! The longer three-act discussion from Steven Spielberg's 1983 blockbuster **Jurassic Park** returns in the much anticipated **Jurassic World**. Directed by James Cameron, *Jurassic World is the newest installment in the film series, starring its top-screen debut in *Velociraptor* two days before its national release on Friday. Keep an eye out for genetically modified reptiles.*

SEE STORY OF THE ARTS ON PAGE 50

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FAIR GAME OPEN SEASON ON VERMONT POLITICS BY PAUL HEINTZ



Gone Gov

Twenty-five years ago, governor **IRVING LARSEN** plucked a young businessman from the Putney Schoolyard and appointed him to a vacant seat in the Vermont House.

On Monday, the now 59-year-old **PETER SHUMLIN** followed his mentor's lead by agreeing to relinquish the governor's office after just three two-year terms. Just as Larsen did in April 1990, Shumlin found his ambitious agenda stifled by fierce fiscal hawks and sagging popularity. And like his predecessor, the embattled Democrat saw a popular Republican opponent waving in the wings, threatening to deliver a tough challenge.

Surrounded by close friends and advisors at a Stanhouse press conference Monday afternoon, Shumlin said he'd spent the three weeks since the legislature's adjournment reflecting on his time in office. He said he'd come to the conclusion that he'd accomplished "the work we set out to do when I became governor." He had, in fact, exceeded his own expectations, he argued.

"I am announcing today for those reasons that I will not be a candidate for a fourth term in 2008," he said.

Shumlin's bombshell marked the end of an era—or at least the beginning of the end of an era. Unlike Kaine, who announced her retirement just seven months before Election Day, Shumlin announced his a full 17 months before voters select his successor.

"I decided to make this decision now because I want those 18 months in office to be focused entirely on considering the work that we have started together," he said. "And we have a lot left to do—a lot left to do."

No doubt there is some truth to that. The demands of a fourth campaign would be huge—and hugely distracting from his day job. With his first campaign finance reporting deadline only a month away, he would have had to begin fundraising immediately.

But the timing of the announcement likely had more to do with Shumlin's desire to retire on his own terms. His most likely general election opponent, Republican Lt. Gov. **PHIL SPARTO**, and even a few Democrats, such as former Sen. **MATT DUNNE**, were already signaling interest in running. Had Shumlin forecasted such a decision, he might appearing as if he was being chased aside.

Even if the better deal, the ever-competitive go wanted he could win another term.

"I've just got to tell you: This is not driven by poll numbers. It's not driven by politics," Shumlin told reporters after making his announcement. "You know me. I love tough races—and I firmly believe I'd run in a presidential if not, we wouldn't win big. That's what I believe."

Shumlin may well have said out a win had everything gone his way. But even he can't truly believe he would've "won big"—just as we could never believe his decision wasn't "driven by politics." Of course it was. With him, everything is.

Surely Shumlin realized that even if he prevailed, the next 17 months would have been a harrowing slog. Old friends would have abandoned him. Envoies allies would have opposed him. Dependable donors would have held out on him. Simply put, it would've sucked.

And to what end?

**I AM ANNOUNCING TODAY
... THAT I WILL NOT BE
A CANDIDATE FOR A
FOURTH TERM IN 2016.**

BY PETER SHUMLIN

"If I had felt that another two years was necessary because there was something so burning that it required us to keep going, I would've done it," Shumlin said in a moment of striking candor during the question-and-answer period.

Indeed? If true, the governor has either accomplished or abandoned much of his original agenda. Gone are the sweeping promises of his 2003 gubernatorial bid, exaggerated and unrealistic though some of them were. He has instead moved on to the incremental imperfections of governance—important, but hardly the stuff of 30-second television ads.

Consider the case of health care reform, the issue that made his political career and ultimately broke it. It was Shumlin's commitment to enact the nation's first universal, publicly financed health care system that differentiated him from his Democratic opponents in 2000 and warranted off a Progressive challenger. It was a promise that, if fulfilled, would have made him a national star. But his inability to deliver a functioning health insurance exchange, as mandated by the federal Affordable Care Act,

robbed him of the political capital to get the job done. His ever-evolving rhetoric around Vermont Health Connect undermined his credibility with voters. And his unwillingness to choose between the liberal Vermonters who elected him and the prominent businessmen who bankrolled him jeopardized Shumlin to delay a decision on single-payer until late last year.

In the end, he couldn't go through with it.

The governor continued to insist he'd work to transform the state's health care system—even after Republican **SEN. MARK RYAN** nearly toppled him last November and Shumlin waved the white flag of surrender on single-payer in December that his efforts to impose a new payroll tax to reduce the so-called Medicaid cost shift were roundly rejected by the legislature this spring.

Shumlin's price was gone.

At Monday's announcement, the governor insisted his leaving department will not relegate him to the status of a lame duck. Of course it will. Legislators will divert their attention to their own electoral ambitions. Cabinet members will depart for more stable jobs—or to battle for his. The media will have interest in what he has to say.

But Shumlin's decision is also an opportunity for political redemption. Instead of questioning his every move, Vermonters may begin to believe him when he says he's simply working to better the state. The election will soon finger what it did about him and remember what it admired, as it does with every retired politician.

Just ask **SEN. WENDY WATTS**, who for the first time in a decade is now viewed favorably by more Americans than not, according to a recent CNN poll. Alas, as they say, makes the heart grow fonder.

Shumlin's problem was never a lack of accomplishment. Rather, it was his undeniable tendency to promise too much—and to under-deliver. When these promises fade from memory, Vermonters may well look back on the substance of Shumlin's record and realize he's got plenty to show for a lifetime in politics.

All In

After Kuno announced her retirement in April 1990, a former state senator named **PERCIVAL** decided to make another run for statewide office. Two years earlier, he had lost the Democratic primary for the U.S. House.

Welch, a liberal attorney, was the gubernatorial nominee after Nixon stepped down, but he lost to Republican **BOB WELSH**, a former four-term governor from Shelburne.

Twenty-five years later, now Congressman Welch announced he's considering another go at the governor's office. Though he hasn't said a word publicly, his longtime chief of staff, **RON ROMAN**, told *Messenger* that his boss "will be taking the time he needs to thoughtfully consider how he can best serve Vermonters."

The opportunity is surely appealing. After nearly nine years in the nation's capital, Welch's odds of scoring in the House majority or as Vermont's next U.S. senator seem as long as

ever. At 68 years old, why not cap off a career by coming home to run the state?

Publicly and privately, members of the Democratic establishment are talking up the possibility — however fanciful it may be — in part because he's the one candidate who might chase Scott, the Republican lieutenant governor, from the field. He'd certainly scare off most Dems.

If Welch stays put, well, more than a dozen candidates — Democrats, Republicans and Progressives alike — say they will give the race a close look. No doubt countless others, too, will look into the mirror and say, "You're the one."

Possible contenders include just about every Republican who's run for governor in the past five years: 2010 nominee and former lieutenant governor **BRUCE BROWN**, 2014 nominee and former state auditor **BARRY BRIDGE**, 2014 nominee Milne and his Libertarian rival, **IAN FERGUSON**, who now calls himself a Republican. Heck, maybe even retired wild West banker **BRUCE LARSEN** will finally enter the ring.

The Democratic list is well even longer. It includes three of Shumlin's 2014 primary opponents: former senator **Dennis**, former business services secretary **BOB MACINA** and Natural Resources Secretary **BOB MARSHWELL**.

House Speaker **DAVE SWIN** (D-Morrisville), Chittenden County State's Attorney **PA O'BRIEN** and former senator **PETER GARDINER** have indicated they'll give the race a look, as will Transportation Secretary **BOB HUNTER** and Agriculture Secretary **CHUCK KING**.

Among the only up-and-coming Democrats who have explicitly said they're not interested are Burlington Mayor **MIKE WOODHOUSE** and Sen. **TIM ADAM** (D/St. Chittenden).

No doubt other candidates will emerge.

While we're throwing names

around, why not former governor **JOHN COUGHLIN** and **WERNER BERRY**? Why not prominent business leaders, such as Green Mountain Power CEO **MARY FERRELL**, Jay Peak owner **DAVE VERHEIJEN** or restaurateur **AL GORRELL**, who chairs the Green Mountain Core Board? Why not Republican mayors **TOMM LADDON** of Barre or **DAVID GILMAN** of Rutland? Or Burlington Electric Department general manager and Douglas administration aide **HEALE LANGEVILLER**? Or someone who hasn't spent her life adulating over the thought of higher office, such as Sen. **JANE KIRBY**, (D-Colchester) or Rep. **ANNE**

ANDERSON (D-Colton)?

Why not my dog, *eww?*

Seriously, folks. If you thought the speculation season couldn't get any sillier, just wait for its denouement. If Welch gives up his congressional seat, Scott surrenders his lieutenant gubernatorial perch or both, huge the speculation's great for the last time, those positions will open up, too. And then there's Attorney General **MALCOLM**, who may retire after 15 years in office — and all those cabinet officials who will likely have to find new jobs.

In other words, pretty much everyone in Vermont will be running for something!

It won't be the case for months — if not a year — who the true contenders for any of these seats are. Anyone who tells you otherwise is full of it.

What is clear is that Vermont is embarking on a governmental chugging of the gears — and that's good for more than just political cockroaches. It's an opportunity to ask some pretty existential questions.

Should Vermont's government continue to expand in scope and mission — or are we due for a period of retrenchment? Should the state continue to rely on its existing revenue streams — or should we be looking to dramatically raise or lower taxes? Did Shumlin go too far in reforming the health care system — or not far enough? Is the Vermont Progressive Party truly a statewide force? Will we ever elect women to higher office in this state?

For answers to these and other burning questions? Stay tuned. ☺

Disclosure: Paul Horvitz worked as Peter Welch's communications director from November 2008 to March 2011.

INFO

Listen to Paul Horvitz's chat at 6:12 a.m.

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Decision Time: Does Phil Scott Have the Drive for a Gubernatorial Run?

BY TERRY HALLENBECK

Since November 2014, Vermont Lt. Gov. Phil Scott has hardly been able to get through a day without some friend, colleague or stranger urging him to run for governor. On Monday afternoon, those entreaties intensified.

Shortly after Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin made the surprising announcement that he will not seek reelection next year, the 46-year-old Republican's phone was buzzing with texts, calls and emails. Senate Minority Leader Joe Benning (R-Calderon) said he sent Scott an email that played on his evening hobby: It read, "Goodnight, start your engines."

"Every conversation I have somehow comes back to that subject," said Scott, who is serving his fifth year as lieutenant governor. His wife, Diana, has been hearing it, too, he said.

It's a powerful elixir to be courted by everyone from strangers on the street to former governor Jim Douglas. But does Scott, who's won three statewide elections and served 30 years in the state Senate, really want to be governor? That's the question.

"For some, they think, 'You have a chance, you have an opportunity, why wouldn't you?' Doesn't everyone want to be governor? I don't know if that's true," Scott said. "I'm not sure they're fully aware of how this would change my life."

Specifically, does the Scott name want to be not make the exciting business he's run for 30 years, the one he's used for 25 years at Thruway Road and the private life he's enjoyed to run for the state's top job?

"I am considering it," Scott said. "It doesn't mean that I'm going to do it, but I am considering it."

His deliberations didn't get any easier on Monday when Shumlin pulled out of the running. The governor's decision vastly expanded the pool of potential candidates and ramped up pressure on Scott to make a choice.

He's in a unique position. The Republican Party's only statewide elected officer has side-crashing appeal, and, after 15 years in politics, even Scott seems to be aware it's time for him to step up or step out.

Vermont's No. 2 said that if he doesn't run for governor, he might not run for office at all, going up his relatively safe slot as lieutenant governor. "That's on the table," Scott said.

"It's generally viewed as new or novel," said Senate Majority Leader Phil Bouché (D-Chittenden).

To reach his decision, Scott sat just chatting with friends and family about whether he'd love to quit driving a mazzini he is looking into when he'd have to do to separate himself from Dulles Construction, the company he co-owns

"I've been in business for 30 years. I've worked very hard to get it to where it is. That's a huge decision," he said.

Scott is also mulling how much a gubernatorial campaign might cost. He's been told it would take at least \$1 million. "A million dollars is a lot of money," said Scott. "I don't have any preconceptions

"Some days I think, I really ought to do this. The winds at your back," he said. "Then on another day it seems overwhelming, and I think, 'Why would I want to do that?'"

Since Shumlin's announcement, plenty of polls have been weighing the same decision. On the Republican side alone, at least four former gubernatorial candidates said they were considering a run: Brian Dubé, Randy Boock, Scott Milne and Dan Falcione. (For more on potential candidates, see *Four Gubernators on page 12*.)

None of the other GOVERNORS has as much going for him as Scott. He's got more political wins and name recognition than any other contender.

"I think he's the best candidate for our party and, frankly, the best person for the job," said Douglas, who served eight years as governor before retiring in 2011. He did acknowledge that Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.), another potential candidate, could prove to be a formidable opponent.

Other prominent Vermont Republicans are also counting on Scott. "He's the guy Vermonters are looking for," said Rep. Heidi Schweersman (R-Stowe), who heavily considered a run for governor last year. Her chief idea to see Republicans really around. "I'm hopeful he decides he wants to do it," she said.

Benning, of the "start your engines" email, said, "I'm really convinced he needs to run, and I really believe he is going to run."

Despite the pressure, friends and colleagues said Scott won't be forced into anything. "I don't think he feels like he has to run," said Dick Wobley of Northfield, a friend since junior high school who has helped run Scott's political campaigns. "If Phil runs for governor, it's because at this time it's best for the state of Vermont."

Scott said he expects to make a decision a year before the November 2016 election, which some consider late. "Hopefully it will be sooner than that," Schweersman said.

Douglas agreed. With a more crowded field, Wobley Scott may need to send "a serious signal" of his intentions before that, he said.

Scott said he needs time. "I'll know when it's right," he said. "I don't want to have regrets."



with his cousin. The company sometimes bids on state contracts, over which the governor has some potential influence, the lieutenant governor does not.

about how difficult it is to raise \$1 million. Do I think it's possible? Yes."

Which way is he leaning? It depends on the day, Scott said, Monday included.

One indication of Scott's intentions lies between messily downed strands, even though he defers his criticisms almost apologetically. "He's losing the faith and trust of a lot of Vermonters," Scott said of Shamba, prior to the governor's announcement that he won't run for reelection. "Vermont is entitled to a different approach."

Critics say Scott has never shown an ability to freely articulate the opposition point of view. He's a tough competitor at the racetrack, where he's a leading winner in the Late Model category, but some wonder whether he could bring the same drive to Montpelier.

"If you're in politics, I think there's an assumption among the public that you're dying to be governor. I don't think that applies to Phil Scott," said Rep. Chris Pearson (D-Barre/Barnet), who said progressives would like to have a candidate for governor next year — though it would not be him.

If Scott runs, he will face far more scrutiny than he has as legislator.

Scott governor, Pearson said. "Phil Scott has gotten far in Vermont politics by dancing around what he believes the voters say," Pearson said. "It's easier to get away with in races for lieutenant governor than for governor."

Scott's never been known for championing causes such as Shamba did by passing a same-sex marriage law, shutting down the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant and trying to tackle universal health care.

Scott's website touts his annual *Wheels for Vermont* event, which collects used tires and raises money for low-income housing assistance. He also points to his Vermont *Everyday John* tour, in which he works alongside ordinary Vermonters.

Although Scott couldn't identify a particular bill that defined him during his 30 years in the Senate, he said he is proud of his work crafting the state's transportation and capital bills. "We closed up the capital bill to take out the pork spending. I didn't feel like you should need to know somebody on the committee to get money," he said. "I wasn't in any cell."

Scott's well-mannered style is likely to keep him at odds with more conservative members of the Vermont Republican Party. That faction declined to support Mike in the 2010 election, instead backing Kilgus and splintering the Republican vote.

Davis Johnson, a political operative who ran Kilgus's campaign, and Scott has not been any more aggressive than Mike in pointing out Shamba's health care failures. Last week, when Shamba declared that a problem with Vermont Health Connect had been fixed, Scott should have immediately gone to the media to question the claim, Johnson contended.

"Where was he?" Johnson asked.

"We need a strong candidate."

Scott's style is more contemplative, but that's what the state needs, Berning said. During the past legislative session, Scott quickly went to Rhode Island with Sen. Jose Kravitz (D-Guildford) and Tim Ashe (D-Pittsford) to talk

about other state insurance exchanges that were working. Oh, and he drove. "That, to me, is a sign of somebody willing to work across party lines," Berning said. "It never has been his style to ask glory."

That was true even back in high school, where Scott was a quiet leader who focused on solving problems, Wahby said. He rarely drew much attention but usually was helping others, he said.

Scott said that he would not have been voted "most likely to run for governor" by his class, but he might have won "most likely to fix your car."

Fixing things is what Scott does, Wahby said. "Phil Scott could always figure out how to get things done when the rest of us drifted off," he added. "Everything Phil's been involved with turned out to be at some point beneficial to all of us, and it usually turns out to be fun or an adventure."

Will the next adventure be running for governor? That's what Scott has to figure out. ☐

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Time to Grow Up? Burlington Considers New Building Heights

BY MELLY WALSH

Imagine that a building suddenly grows taller, offering a better view of the surrounding scenery from its higher vantage. It would also cast a longer shadow and stand out more.

The consequences for its neighbors could be hard to predict in advance. That's Burlington's dilemma. The city is considering zoning changes that could alter its skyline and transform what is now a decidedly low-rise burg into a higher-rise urban center.

Developer Don Simon has proposed building two 15-story towers in part of the \$200 million makeover of his Burlington Town Center mall. That would require changes to the 105-foot height limit now in place downtown.

The towers would contain about 260 units of housing, likely apartments and condos. They would face Cherry Street in the heart of the Queen City and would rise about 180 feet, making them the tallest buildings in Vermont. Currently, that superlative belongs to Decker Towers, an 11-story affordable-housing complex at 210 St. Paul Street in Burlington that, by city measurements, rises 163 feet.

Although they have not been formally proposed to the Burlington Development Review Board, the twin buildings were part of Simon's pitch in the public design process now under way for the mall project. City officials are discussing possible zoning changes to allow the higher structures and plan to make a proposal to the planning commission and city council, both of which would have to OK the work.

"I think that the challenge here is doing it well," said David E. White, director of the Burlington Department of Planning and Zoning. "I think you can do taller, and you can accommodate the growing needs of the city whether it's for housing or for office space. I think you can grow taller as long as you do it in a way that's really sensitive to the context of the buildings around it."

The mall faces historic Church Street. It's on a parcel that once hosted an Italian American neighborhood full of homes and shops. They were bulldozed in the 1960s during the national urban renewal craze, forever altering the character of the southwestern corner of downtown between Church Street and Lake Champlain.

The mall, office buildings, a hotel and a parking garage replaced the



neighborhood. The shopping center, which had been there since it opened in 1976, but today it's plagued by vacancies, and many consider it dated. Simon purchased it in 2002 and proposed the exhibition project in 2004.

While various questions surrounded the proposal, height is the central issue. Because many of the historic buildings on the Cherry Street area were demolished decades ago, the towers could conceivably be designed to fit in, White said. Their shape and site are critical, he added.

Renderings show wider base corners aligned close to the street, and narrower silhouettes as the structures rise. Although the images are preliminary, this shape could reduce shadows and lessen the visual impact of the higher floors because they would be set back rather than lean directly over the street.

A computerized solar study to chart how different designs cast shadows would be part of the review process, White said.

The 14-story buildings would be large in scale for Vermont, but not unique in a world where the highest skyscraper — in Dubai — is a towering 2,717 feet.

As cities such as New York and Chicago grow, early skyscrapers, including the Empire State Building and the Sears Tower, were viewed as marvels of

engineering and signs of man finally reaching for the stars. They symbolized strength, power and promise. The One World Trade Center, 144 stories at the site where the September 11, 2001, attacks destroyed the twin towers, serves effectively as a monument.

But skyscrapers don't appeal to everyone. Some of the best-loved cities in the world are known for their low profiles: Rome, Washington, D.C., Venice, and many parts of Paris.

And some skyscraper icons have long, dark shadows and little greenery to soften all the glass and concrete.

"There are some places that are just awful canyons," conceded Peter Owens, director of Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office.

Owens believes Burlington has room for carefully placed and well-designed high-rise buildings. Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Canada, are examples of cities that have done it right, he said.

"Do we want to have Manhattan? Absolutely not," Owens said. "But is there a place for some taller buildings in Burlington that will not adversely impact the overall character? My sense is, there is."

Some observers are wary. Matt Weiss is president of the board at Preservation Burlington, a local nonprofit that works to protect and improve historic structures.

"The Burlington Town Center owes

its existence to the ongoing policy of urban renewal, which saw the destruction of historic structures and neighborhoods," Weiss said. "While in some respects the proposed redevelopment seems to remedy some of those mistakes, Preservation Burlington would argue cautions. It is not clear why the goals of redevelopment, including the creation of new residential space, cannot be met by building within the city's current height limits."

Under current zoning, the 105-foot downtown building height limit usually translates to 10 or 11 stories. Higher structures are allowed under special zoning rules in two other locations up to 140 feet on the University of Vermont campus, and up to 180 feet at the University of Vermont Medical Center. At about 108 feet, the hospital's proposed outpatient building would be among the tallest structures in the city.

But unless you count the steeple on St. Allen Chapel, which tops out at 165 feet, according to real estate data mining firm Zillow, no buildings at UVVM or the hospital campus come close to the maximum allowable height.

So the tallest building in the city is still down the hill — Decker Towers, which was constructed in 1971, before Burlington's current height limit was imposed.

It was built in a time just south

Evergreen skyline



of downtown, making it less visible, which might be a good thing. While Burlington has many notable buildings, the city's tallest structure does not show up in brochures promoting the city or on postcards tourists send home. The bland, block-like building lacks detail. Its underwhelming design could be seen as a recommendation against towers or as a challenge to put something more exciting in the city's top spot.

As the mall plan is discussed, city officials are weighing proposed new zoning for downtown called form-based code. It's unclear whether the new code will be approved by the time the mall renovation comes up for review, or whether the mall will be reviewed under the existing regulations. Either way, the planning commission and city council would have to approve taking the height limit before the towers can be permitted, according to city planning director.

Measuring building height is not a simple exercise, and that's reflected in height limits. The limits for CVM and the hospital involve a one-to-one ratio, meaning recent to recognize that they are on a hill overlooking the city for example.

Building height varies depending on what side is measured, and whether rooftop mechanical equipment and features such as solar panels are taken into consideration. Stories are not standardized. A building with higher ceilings and fewer stories might end up being taller than a structure with lower ceilings and more stories.

For these reasons, height limits are often formulated with a maximum number of feet as well as consideration of stories. So what are the tallest buildings in Burlington now?

According to a list formulated by the city planning and zoning department,

which includes rooftop mechanical equipment and solar panels in its calculations, the office building at 500 Bank Street measures 116 feet, making it just a hair shorter than Decker Tower and putting it in the No. 2 slot. Next come Worlaine Residential, at 1075 feet, Key Bank, 105 feet, and Cathedral Square, 103.2 feet.

Seven Days recently spoke to people at busy Cherry and Church streets, within view of the mall site, posing the question: *It would Burlington grow up?*

"I just think Burlington is pretty the way it is," said Andy Thack, a Northfield retiree. "I don't know why they would need to build higher." The low-rise character is part of Burlington's appeal, Thack said. "It makes it kind of intimate place, and a lot of people like to come here for that reason." Ideas opposed to growing up, Barbara Sawcote, a real-estate agent from East Corinth. "I think it's a terrible idea," she said. "If you're on the lake you don't want to look over and see that. If you are on the hill coming down, you don't want to see it either."

But others like the idea of a growth spur. High-rise buildings would make Burlington more cosmopolitan, they say. "I definitely would like to see it go up, at least a little bit," said Maggie Stevens, a retail worker and student at Champlain College. Fourteen stories sounds about right, she said, and she'd like to see the mall reduced. "I think it would be cool to have something a little bit new and different...Change is good."

Much is at stake in Burlington looks upward. "I think we'll do it, it would enhance the character of Burlington," Owens said. "Poorly done, it would be a disaster." ☐

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Power Broker: Under Neale Lunderville, Little Burlington Electric Plans Big

BY ALICIA FRIESE

Last fall the Burlington Electric Department made national news when it announced that 100 percent of its power was coming from renewable energy sources. The municipal-owned utility started running energy efficiency programs more than two decades ago, and the city now consumes less electricity than it did in 1988.

still in his twenties. Later, Gov. Peter Shumlin picked him to direct the state's recovery effort after Tropical Storm Irene devastated a broad swath of Vermont. Most recently, he guided the rapidly growing natural gas company, NG Advantage, as CEO.

Last summer Lunderville, a birchid Burlington native with wavy hair and a

on BEE's green reputation, Lunderville argued that there's plenty more to do to cement Burlington's status as "one of the most sustainable cities in America." His goals include putting solar panels on thousands of homes and finding a use for the waste energy that escapes the city's biomass plant.

First, though, BEE is going after

the same story all around the country, according to BEE's Berns Vermont Gas CEO Don Randall: "I agreed that this market has been 'a challenge to penetrate'."

As Berns described them, many of Burlington's rental properties are "old Queen Annes that got chopped" into several units. Historic homes are notorious for wasting energy. Typically they are poorly insulated, with outdated heating systems. And in many cases the person who owns the building isn't paying the utility bills. That means he or she has little incentive to invest in costly efficiency upgrades.

In an effort they've dubbed the Energy Cherry Challenge, BEE and Vermont Gas are offering Burlington landlords a deal that they hope will be too generous to turn down. After providing a free energy audit, Vermont Gas will pay 75 percent of the cost for weatherization and heating equipment. At the same time, BEE will offer a number of free or subsidized electricity upgrades — ranging from replacing light bulbs to refrigerators. Instead of having to deal with the companies separately, landlords can one-stop shop. The upgrades will increase property values, which should make them appealing to owners, Berns said. For their part, renters should see lower utility bills.

"You gotta be crazy not to take advantage of that," said Stu McGowan, who owns nearly 50 properties in the Old North End, almost all of which are rented in multiple, efficient homes.

Marc Jacobs, a Burlington landlord since 1988, had the same reaction. "I mean, wow, how could you not do that?"

Jacobs and McGowan were early adopters of energy efficiency measures and have already retrofitted their buildings. The question is: How can Vermont Gas and BEE convince the landlords who've been dragging their heels?

In perched California, people have taken to social media to "brought shame" those who waste water. BEE and Vermont Gas plan to use those channels and other tactics to do the opposite: create energy efficiency landlords.

They've hired Gaunachoff, a local company that designs games, apps and "engagement strategies," to call attention to the program. Participating landlords — who will be the so-called "cheer" — will get a job-monster-shaped ad to place on their buildings.



The small local utility has still greater ambitions. During the March confirmation hearing for Neale Lunderville, BEE's general manager, Mayor Miro Weinberger told the Burlington City Council: "I personally believe that some of the most important work [this administration will undertake] ... is going to happen at the Burlington Electric Department."

Lunderville was equally optimistic, telling councilors, "I see only vast green fields of opportunity for Burlington Electric and for its people."

So given BEE's sterling record, how much more can it do?

A lot, according to the man in charge. At 40, Lunderville already has quite the résumé. He was a top official in the Douglas administration, when he was

crossed town, agreed to serve as interim general manager at BEE.

He admitted that when he took the temporary job, he had no intention of applying for the permanent position. He entered an enthusiastic staff and the innovative atmosphere at BEE with changing his mind.

Lunderville may still get hard back into politics — hours after Gov. Shumlin announced he wouldn't run for reelection, a local pundit suggested he'd make a strong Republican candidate. Lunderville told *Street Days* he's hoping Phil Scott will run, but he will "seriously consider it" if the best-governed governor does not.

For now, though, he's committed to his current role — and he comes off as a fully converted energy geek. Building

some high-hanging fruit in the realm of energy efficiency. This week, it's teaming up with Vermont Gas to unveil a program that offers unprecedented discounts to get Burlington landlords to upgrade their buildings.

Rental units have been "one of the hardest ones to crack," according to BEE energy services director Chris Lucas. For years, the utility has worked with big customers — the 20 largest consume 50 percent of the electricity in the Queen City — to cut demand. Plenty of homeowners have also taken advantage of efficiency incentives offered to residential customers.

The utility has had less luck working over Burlington's landlords, who control 10,800 rental apartments, or 60 percent of the city's residential properties. It's

Landerfelle thinks the timely marketing will win people over. "Energy efficiency is a very unapproachable term, and we want to make it approachable for all Burlington customers," he said.

They're also going to reach out to them the old-fashioned way — with phone calls and snail mail. The goal is to get at least 50 landlords to sign up. Using information from the city assessor and their own billing records, BED will first target those rental properties that consume the most energy.

The efficiency plan has Landerfelle's fingerprints all over it, but the new GM emphasized he deserves no credit for BED's headline-grabbing achievement last year of using 100 percent renewable energy; he came on board as the utility was purchasing the hydro-power plant that enabled it to meet the goal.

Landerfelle nonetheless spoke proudly of the accomplishment, saying that it would be "impossible for me to overstate" its significance.

Several environmental experts have suggested otherwise, including Sandra Lema, a senior attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation. "Simply taking accounting measures to make claims about clean energy doesn't get us there," she told the Associated Press after BED's landmark announcement.

Lema was referring to BED's buying and selling renewable energy credits, a widely used and accepted practice, but one that had been the source of some questionable claims by utilities.

Using the company white board, Landerfelle explained that he wants to win on the city off the credit transaction, not because they are unnecessary, but because he sees a change coming in REC markets.

Today, BED can sell RECs high and buy low, which nets the utility roughly \$10 million from those transactions annually. That cash infusion is one of the reasons the electric department has been able to avoid raising rates for the last six years. But Landerfelle predicts that as more renewable energy projects are created in New England, the supply of credits will increase. That will drive

down prices and make it harder for BED to make a profit from its REC sales.

Currently, solar power makes up only 1 percent of BED's portfolio. Landerfelle wants to increase that share significantly. The goal, he said, is to get "literally thousands of homes generating electricity so that they are using it for themselves and feeding it back into the grid." He said that will require finding better ways to store solar energy and making sure customers actually recoup the cost of installing the panels.

Landerfelle is also interested in re-asserting an idea that has been around for years: BED owns half of the Mt. Mansfield Generating Station, a large biomass electricity-generation plant located in the Burlington territory. Identifiable by its single powder-blue smokestack, the plant supplies enough 45 percent of the city's electricity.

It also generates periodic criticism from people concerned about the air pollutants resulting from combustion and about the sustainability of current wood harvesting practices. One of the biggest complaints is that only a fraction of the energy from the burned wood is actually converted to electricity, the rest escapes as waste heat.

Multiple studies have tried to determine whether it would make financial sense to capture that energy and distribute it directly to large institutions, such as the University of Vermont, through a district heating system. Working with a crime-lad group called REDDES, or Burlington District Energy Service, BED is building a financial model that seeks to deliver a definitive answer. Landerfelle got animated while talking about the project's potential.

But he was also careful to note that BED wouldn't get too bold. Alluding to Burlington Telecom, the municipal telecommunications provider that has only recently dug itself out of a deep financial hole, Landerfelle said that the project would be shelved if it's deemed a risk to taxpayers. "We are very sensitive about big projects — the mayor has been very explicit about that," he said.

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Brooklyn Born: Bernie's Beginnings in a Hardworking 'Hood

BY KEVIN KELLEY

In a Brooklyn, a 10-minute subway ride separates Hillary Clinton's Brooklyn Heights presidential campaign headquarters from the Midwood apartment house where Bernie Sanders grew up in the 1940s and '50s. Culturally, however, the distance is vast.

The respective locations say a lot about the values and politics of the two candidates — particularly those of Sanders, whose views were shaped in that solid old neighborhood of workers. His Brooklyn youth marked Sanders with more than the accent he shares with Larry King, Barbra Streisand and Jay Z.

Clinton has set up camp at 1 Pierpoint Place, a 19-story office tower that also houses the wealth-management firm Morgan Stanley, headquarters of a \$107 billion bailout. The building is advertised as representing "Brooklyn cool."

There's nothing cool about the an-story, beige-brick building where Sanders is lined with his father, Eli, a Polish immigrant and paint salesman, his mother, the former Dorothy Glasberg, and his elder brother, Larry. The 86-unit building at 1525 East 26 Street was sturdy in better condition when the Sanders family occupied apartment 2C, where Bernie and Larry shared one of the two bedrooms.

Inside, there's trash on the floor of the dim lobby and in the 80-year-old building's creaky elevator. Creaking around walk through the halls, which are shared with tenants clustering in Russian and Spanish.

Jake Lopez, son of the building's superintendent, said the place hasn't changed much in the 33 years he's lived there. Most of the residents are older Jews, with a growing proportion of Asians and Latinos, married Lopez, who's studying for a physical training degree at nearby Kingsborough Community College. "It's a good building — pretty quiet: except when the Mexicans on the first floor have birthday parties," Lopez said, with a smile.

His eyebrows lifted when a reporter informed him that a candidate for president of the United States used to live in the building. Lopez said he's never heard of Bernie Sanders, who declined to be interviewed for this story.

It's a 10-minute walk along leafy streets of mostly single-family homes to James Madison High School, where



James Madison High School



BERNIE I
Young

BERNIE I
Middle-aged

BERNIE I
Older

Sanders excelled academically and athletically and exhibited what became an abiding interest in paraprofessionals. Sanders' entry in Madison's yearbook, *Log*, notes that he captained both the track and cross country teams, served as class president, and reported for the student newspaper, the *Highways*, before graduating in 1958.

The well-maintained, heading an-story building on Bedford Avenue housed more students in Sanders' day than the 3,200 who presently attend Madison. Martha "Marty" Weinstein Alpert, president of the school's alumni association, says about 5,000 students were enrolled when she and Sanders were studying at Madison. Back then, the school day was divided into morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate them all, recalled Alpert, who graduated in 1957.

As a cheerleader at track meets, Alpert watched Sanders run but didn't know him personally. He was a star even as a sophomore, she said.

Madison was "a wonderful place to go to school," Alpert attested. "I walked out of there with the equivalent of a four-year college education. Many of the teachers were ancient but excellent."

The school was much more ethnically homogeneous 60 years ago, when, Alpert estimated, Jews accounted for about 90 percent of the student body. And due in part to their strong emphasis on education, Madison ranked in one of New York City's best public academic institutions, she said.

Jewish immigrant parents inlaid in their children "the mentality that we come here to give you this wonderful life, and you're got to take advantage of

BERNIE
beat



Sanders and his father's childhood home

it," Alpert explained. "And the way to succeed is by getting a good education."

Madison had an intensely political vibe in the '50s, she noted. In addition to discussing national and international issues, many morning hours were classes debated school politics.

The Madison Knights listed leftward, as did the views of the neighborhood's adults. Larry Sanders, Bernie's elder brother, described mid-20th-century Midwood as a Democratic Party stronghold committed to the activist, big government principles of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Alpert agreed, saying that in the era of the Brooklyn Dodgers, "a Republican in that neighborhood was as rare as a Yankee fan."

Madison isn't quite as progressive today. As in many parts of Brooklyn, the Orthodox Jewish community has grown

POLITICS

substantially. And unlike most secular or reform Jews, many Haredim vote Republicans. In 2012, GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney captured about 90 percent of the vote in some heavily Orthodox Jewish precincts in Brooklyn, while over half the borough of 2.4 million residents delivered an 80-88 percent landslide for Barack Obama.

Madison still has a sizable Jewish enrollment, but whites now make up a 44 percent minority of students. "We're an accurate reflection of the demographics of New York City" said principal Josh Cohen. Asian Americans account for 20 percent of the student body, while the African American and Latino communities each contribute 17 percent. Of the remaining 3 percent, 1 percent is Native American and 1 percent falls into the "other" category.

As Cohen led *Seven Days* on a tour of the building, she passed every minute or two to tell a student to remove a hat or stop texting. With summer break beckoning, the corridors ring with laughter as students changed clothes. "They're good kids," Cohen said. "And a pleasure," Cohen said.

"But what can I tell you? I'm in charge of a place with 2,000 teenagers!"

The school still seeks to uphold the claim that its emblemized doors its main entrance: Excellence in Education. More than three-quarters of Madison's students enter a two- or four-year college, according to the New York City Department of Education. But only a few attend private universities, noted social studies teacher Mike Cimpiti. "Most of our kids can't afford that," he said.

The school's positive reputation and wide range of academic and extracurricular offerings — including 29 sports teams — have ensured enrollment to steadily increase in recent years. Cohen pointed out, "We're getting students from private schools, both Catholic and yeshivas," said the principal, who is an 88 Madison alumnus.

The school's entrance is more physically secure than it was when Sanders attended. And after passing through a metal detector screened by a security guard, visitors and students are now greeted by

a Wall of Distinctions that features photos of notable alumni. They include four Nobel laureates, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, songwriter Garth Brooks, snarky comedian Andrew Dice Clay (born Andrew Clay Schmanstein) and three U.S. senators. Norm Coleman of Minnesota, Chuck Schumer of New York, and Bernard Sanders of Vermont (Coleman served a term as a Republican, Schumer is a Democrat, and Sanders, currently Vermont's junior senator, is an independent).

Cimpiti recalled Sanders' talk to Madison students in 2008, on the occasion of his Wall of Distinction plaque dedication. "He said he owed everything to what he got from this building," Cimpiti said during a conversation in the principal's office. "He said he wanted to give something back to Madison."

"We're all very proud that a Brooklyn-born and -bred alum and a Madison alum is running for president," said Larry Melamed, an English teacher at the school. He and principal Cohen both said they hope Sanders will speak again at the school, regardless of whether he succeeds in his quest for

the White House. Sanders can count on getting the vote of alumni association head Alpert, who now lives in suburban Westchester County. "I was a Hillary girl in 2008," Alpert said, referring to Clinton's race against Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination. "But I'm far from new. He's a genuine article, and Hillary is not."

Sanders may also appeal to more conservatives, Alpert added, citing a few of his "Bernie-loving" Republican friends as examples.

Either Clinton or Sanders would be preferable to whatever the GOP nominates, suggested Alpert, who worked for a time as an aide to a liberal Democratic congressman who represented parts of Queens and the Bronx. "I can't even talk to you about that Republican eleven parade," she said, emphasizing that she is speaking in a personal capacity. "Such elections!" ☐

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NEW THIS WEEK

June 10, 2014

The Montpelier Senior Activity Center held its 10th annual **Senior Picnic** last Saturday at the National City Clubroom. We caught up with the multi-generational attendees about their picnic memories.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:



JUNE 9, 2014
Residents at Vermont's largest retirement community packed the Burlington waterfront and went to see U.S. Senator Tim Wirth's office president campaign.



JUNE 27, 2014
The 2014 episode of **Black in Vermont** takes the camera to three days — specifically on **Coloration: Parents Pickles and Plastic Surgery** who were recently inducted into the New England Newspaper Hall of Fame.



JUNE 20, 2013
Blowing back, blizzards, snow and major ice on grandmothers to the 2013 annual **Black in Vermont Festival** at the Greenleaf of Vermont Horticultural Research and Education Center in South Burlington had winds.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE BLOG

Winooski Students and Parents Ask for School Buses



Asha Khawassia, 12
Winooski High School senior

minutes to school in all kinds of weather, including subzero days when the wind is howling. If it's hard for her at age 12, she said, think how it must be for the little kids.

Khawassia, whose family came to Vermont from Nepal in 2011, and other parents called for safe and reliable transportation.

School superintendent Sean McInnes agreed to study the issue, as did city manager Katherine Decemine. If the solution were simple, according to Decemine, it would be in place already. That is likely to be complicated and expensive, doesn't mean the city can't make progress, she added. "We're going to roll up our sleeves and get creative," she said.

Most Vermont school systems bus children to school although there are exceptions

— such as in Burlington — where many neighborhoods are close to schools. Winooski does offer some bus transportation for its roughly 800 students. The district pays about \$60,000 annually for field trip rates and to athletic, preschool and regional high school bus programs. There is also transportation for students with disabilities. And in Burlington

it serves good in theory a small city where children sit in buses to school and taxpayers face big bills because there is no regular yellow school bus system. So it goes in Winooski.

But it doesn't work for families, according to many city residents. They picked a meeting June 9 to say that the reality of walking to school is cold, inconvenient and risky — especially for very young students.

Even in a city of only 1,400 square miles, the walk to school contributes to the fact that 7 to 10 percent of students are late every day and 4 to 6 percent are absent. That's according to Parents and Youth for Change, which organized the meeting to present research and survey results, and to publicly ask school and community leaders to commit to studying solutions over the next six months.

According to the group, parents who have car-pool drive their children to school. But in some parts of Winooski, 30 percent of households lack a car. Parents who might like to walk children to school can't necessarily get to work on time if they add 20 to 40 minutes for that. Then there's Vermont's bitterly cold winter weather — so frigid that some days the elementary school simply reopens — but kids still have to walk to school.

"It's usually hard to walk in the cold," 11-year-old Winooski High School junior Asha Khawassia told the crowd at the Otter Community Center. Her father owns a car but drives it to work at 3 a.m. every morning to support the family, she said. That means she walks the 10- to 15

minutes to school in all kinds of weather, including subzero days when the wind is howling. If it's hard for her at age 12, she said, think how it must be for the little kids.

icase you missed it: The 2014 episode of Black in Vermont takes the camera to three days — specifically on Coloration: Parents Pickles and Plastic Surgery who were recently inducted into the New England Newspaper Hall of Fame.

CTTA general manager Karen Wolton and at the meeting that she was aware that her parents weren't involved in Winooski. "I can see that problem tomorrow with a phone call," she said to loud applause. But Wolton said she could not make larger decisions involving CTTA funds and needs without authority from the systems board.

After the meeting, Wolfe said that not everyone is sympathetic to the call for bus transportation. "Some people think we're complaining because it's a short walk."

But Wolfe and she talked to parents who don't want to move to Winooski because of the walk to school policy. "They do not want to add that to their to-do list," she said.

MELLY WALSH

Tutus and Tractors: Farm to Ballet Project Celebrates Vermont Agriculture

BY AMY MELISSA GIVORSTREET

Farm to table. Farm to school. Farm to fork. And farm to ballet? Yes, Vermont is now the birthplace of a unique agricultural movement that's taking root this summer.

Conceived by Vermont native **CELESTE PRIGGER**, the *Farm to Ballet Project* is a full-length production with 26 dancers that tells the story of a farm from spring through fall. It's "intended to celebrate Vermont's farming culture while expanding classical ballet's audience," according to the project's website. The performances will happen August 1 through 22 at agraria sites in Dorset, Shelburne, Charlotte, Poultney, Rensselaer and Essex Junction.

Prigger's motivation for the project can be traced all the way back to his childhood. "When I was little," he says, "my family took a trip to Yellowstone National Park. I remember stops everywhere saying not to feed the bears because the poachers were in human feed would make them sick. After that, we started to eat very healthy."

Now with two young children of his own, Prigger says, "The organic and local food movement was one of the things that brought my wife and me together. We eat organic and local as much as possible."

In addition to a passion for healthy food, Prigger, 45, brings an accomplished dance resume to his art project. He grew up in New Haven and left at age 15 to attend the Barnum Conservatory for the Arts in Connecticut. In 2008, he joined Boston Ballet and participated



in the New York International Ballet Competition. Prigger went on to dance with companies in Washington, D.C., Houston and other cities. He returned to Vermont in 2005 and lives in Winooski.

These days, Prigger stays busy teaching eight adult ballet classes a week at **AGRICULTURE SOUTH BURLINGTON ARTS** in Winooski. He decided to choreograph and produce the full-length *Farm to Ballet* production in part to give his students an opportunity to perform. "Many of these folks have never been onstage before," he says.

During a recent rehearsal of *Farm*

to Ballet in South Burlington, Prigger guides his dancers through a challenging routine, perfecting each section through repetition.

"The ballet tells the story of life on a farm, set to Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*." The production starts with the grow season for the spring and then the farmer plowing out the field. Prigger explains. The subsequent pieces move through the seasonal steps of planting, irrigating, tending, and then harvesting the farm's produce. Scenes feature goats, bees, an apple tree, a salad and a pig to dance with the farmer and the weather-vane rooster. "The ballet ends

with a celebratory farm-share pickup scene, just before the goose fly south for the winter," Prigger says.

Rat his choreography, Prigger has incorporated classical variations and corps de ballet assemblies from traditional ballets — *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Oppepla*, among others. Much of the movement has been adapted to ensure that the dancers can perform on grass, since their outdoor venues will have no actual stage. That means no pointe shoes and no tutus for the dancers, but lots of jumping. Off-peak rehearsals will start in July.

All volunteers, the dancers are regulars in Prigger's popular adult ballet classes who run the gamut from experienced dancers to novices at the barn. One of the farmer is dentist **UNIVERSITY CLAN PHILIPPS** of South Burlington. The 35-year-old teacher and mother of a preschooler danced in her Maryland hometown until her early teens, then returned to ballet when she discovered Prigger's adult program.

OLD HANES PHILIPPS, 28, has been dancing for nearly 22 years. She grew up in Hingham and earned her bachelor's in dance and acrobatics at Smith College. For this project she has been cast in the Queen Bee in the "Pollination" dance. "Clutch is taking classical ballet and making it accessible to Vermont audiences as a way that it's appealing to all ages — dance enthusiasts, farmers and locavores alike," says Phillips, who now lives in Sudbury. She describes the performance as "beautiful, creative, clever, funny and touching."

live culture
VERMONT ARTS & VIBES

EXCERPT FROM THE BLOG

DINOSAURS ARRIVE IN VERMONT, 68 MILLION YEARS LATE

The fossil records of nearby states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut indicate that dinosaurs roamed these lands long before America's first ever did. Though prehistoric creatures once dwelled in the tropical state that became Lake Champlain, no dinosaurs ever stomped across the Green Mountains. Until now.

Jurassic World the long-delayed third sequel to the 1993 Ben Jurasic

Park will have an unusual premiere in Burlington two days before its national release. The film, directed by Burlingtonian Colin Trevorrow (is the main attraction of a fundraising event for the Vermont International Film Foundation. Though the local and butter of WFFF is screening "small" independent and foreign films that do not receive widespread theatrical release, the local connection to this \$150 million summer blockbuster was

a perfect opportunity to raise money for and awareness of the organization.

After directing just one mid-budget independent film, 2012's *Safety Not Guaranteed*, Trevorrow was tapped by name rather than Steven Spielberg and his producing team to join the ranks of big Hollywood players. Though his first feature contains no dinosaurs and his second feature would appear to contain little in the way of "quirky" romance, Trevorrow says that the two films are

more alike than they might appear. This week, Vermonters will have the chance to decide for themselves.

—ETHAN DE SERRE

See Oliver on *Solo* interview with director Colin Trevorrow on the June 5 days culture blog. Use Code:

The main peak at Jurassic World is Wednesday, June 13, 7 p.m. at Williams-Sonoma. See www.vtartsandvibes.com for registration. The event is a fundraiser for the Vermont International Film Festival. *WTFWF* Jurassic World opens to the public on Friday, June 14.

I AM A BALLET DANCER, NOT A FARMER, BUT I THINK HEALTHY FOOD PRODUCTION IS CRUCIAL TO A HEALTHY SOCIETY.

CHAYEN PRIGGER



KATHARINE HARRIS

The star of the show, in the role of Lead Farmer, is 33-year-old **SEAN STORMS**, who says she moved to Vermont in 2009 after realizing she was on the wrong career path — playing minor roles in LA film projects. Storms discovered Prigger's ballet classes soon after she relocated to Burlington, longing to get back to dancing after a long hiatus.

Storms studied ballet from age 9 at a pre-professional level, but gave it up to attend the University of Virginia, from which she graduated in 2003. "By the time I reached high school, ballet had become a grind for me," she says. "I felt like I was missing out on other things."

An artist and the creative director of Earth Grow Kids, a statewide public education campaign, Storms says she now has a deeper appreciation for the art form, not to mention that it's "the best workout regime I've ever found!" She's excited that her brother, Gary Storms, a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, will come to see her perform in Vermont.

"I believe watching ballet at a farm

will be a totally new experience for him," Storms says. "My character is strong, confident, grateful for her crops and adoring of her animals."

Prigger says all the dancers have participated in the project in ways beyond performing — from helping with fundraising to making costumes. His enthusiasm for linking agriculture to ballet appears to be contagious.

And he's not done thinking about ways to strengthen Vermont's local food systems. Prigger says he's brainstorming ways to bring Farm to Ballet to so-called "food deserts," where access to healthy, affordable nutritional options is limited. "I am a ballet dancer, not a farmer," he says, "but I think healthy food production is crucial to a healthy society."

You might say Prigger is being the farm that this project will "spotlight Vermont as a place where agriculture, arts and community come together." ☐

INFO

farmtotheater.org

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MONTREAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

A Summer Exhibit Brings 'America's Michelangelo' Into View in Vermont

BY KEVIN J. KELLER

Considering Brumidi (1855-1890), the creator of some of the greatest artwork in the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., realized in an unexpected glow for 70 some years before his reputation was gradually restored in the mid-20th century. Brumidi's achievement was finally awarded formal honors in 2004 when he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

This summer, Vermonters may wonder where why a supposedly skilled painter working in such a prominent venue remained forgotten for so long. Brumidi's baroque style, replete with adorning angels and swooning nymphs, won't tickle the taste of some contemporary viewers. But entry will still admire the artist's mastery of trompe l'oeil technique and the tricky brain traces (now traces) of man.

An exhibit celebrating Brumidi's work opens July 22 at the Justin Smith Merrill House in Stafford.

A talk in South Stafford last Sunday by Barbara Wolman, curator of Washington, D.C.'s Architect of the Capitol, served as a prologue to the show. It's timed to coincide with the scheduled completion this fall of a two-year-long restoration of the building's dramatic cast-iron dome.

Wolman spoke in part about Brumidi's friendship with Merrill (1810-1898), a self-made merchant who served in Congress for 44 years, including a disreputable 1860s term as senator. The presence in the Merrill House of a few Brumidi paintings accounts for the United States Capitol Historical Society's decision to situate the show in a central Vermont village of slightly more than 1,000 residents.

Merrill, who left school at age 15, is best known for sponsorship of the 1862 Land Grant College Act. It set aside revenue from the sale of more than 17 million acres of federal lands for establishment of public higher education institutions in every state.

Merrill was an art lover who enthusiastically supported efforts to beautify the Capitol. Wolman noted. He also called for completion of the Washington Monument, construction of a separate Library of Congress building and approval of an enlargement plan for the Capitol by a grand design by renowned



landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Today, Brumidi's status as "America's Michelangelo" is revived. That compassion can be traced to a speech Merrill made in the Senate floor on the occasion of his friend's death. "So long had he devoted his heart and strength to this Capitol that his love and reverence for it was not surpassed by even that of Michelangelo for St. Peter's," Merrill told his colleagues.

Among the Brumidi pieces hanging in the home is one 1861 study "Studying." It shows a man accompanied by children displaying a Brumidi portrait of U.S. Senator William Prescott. Brumidi's oil portraits of Charles Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow are also displayed at the home.

Brumidi painted numerous other works for Merrill's mansion in Washington, which was razed several

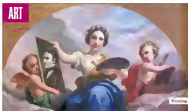
"THE APOTHEOSIS OF WASHINGTON," A FRESCO PAINTED IN THE CAPITOL DOME'S INTERIOR, AND A SERIES OF RICHLIY DECORATED CORRIDORS ON THE BUILDING'S SENATE SIDE ARE CONSIDERED BRUMIDI'S MASTERPIECES.

years ago as part of an urban-renewal initiative. Most of those pieces have been preserved in Washington.

"The Apotheosis of Washington," a fresco painted in the Capitol dome's interior, and a series of richly decorated corridors on the building's Senate side are considered Brumidi's masterpieces. He died prior to completing "The Prince of American History," a grandiose pantheon 300 feet in circumference that rings the Capitol rotunda. Working largely on the basis of Brumidi's designs, artist sculptor finished the stunning trompe l'oeil work.

Wolman described Brumidi, a native of Rome who owned a child shop there, as a "jolly man" who "enjoyed women." He married a teenager when he was 30, she noted.

Brumidi immigrated to the U.S. in 1852 after spending 35 months in jail for alleged involvement in a republican uprising against the pope. He worked in New York and Philadelphia as well as in Washington, but there's no evidence that he traveled to Vermont, despite his friendship with Merrill. That absence will be partly offset by the arrival of the "America's Michelangelo" show in central Vermont next month. ☐



INFO

"America's Michelangelo: The Life and Creative Works of Contemporary America" July 22 through October 12, at the Justin Smith Merrill House in Stafford. merrillhouse.org

Typewriter Enthusiasts Tap Into Their Passion at a Burlington 'Type-In'

BY MARGOT HARRISON

Last Saturday afternoon, Burlington's Mayhew Café filled with a sound eerily familiar to people of a certain age: the tapping of manual typewriters.

The typists, ranging from grade-schoolers to boomers, came from around the state. What they had in common was a fascination with the ingenious, durable machines that once represented state-of-the-art personal communications technology. And, contrary to a common image of typewriter enthusiasts as older than dust, their enthusiasm for the bygone world of Wits-Out and mislead coverage remains very frank and contagious.

That enthusiasm started with a signifier: **SAM WELLS**. "You're in the right place at the right time, and I use an Underwood," he cried, welcoming a newcomer to the gathering.

In his day job, Wells, 51, is the principal of Underhill E.D. Elementary School, where he works to equip kids with the latest technology in his classroom. Wells runs a blog called **VINTAGE VINTAGE**, in which he chronicles his acquisitions of new-old machines and the stories behind them.

For the first ever **TYPE-IN**, Wells tracked seven of his typewriter fans

Montpelier to Mayhew and set them up on a long table with paper and instructions to "Please type on me."

Among those who obliged was **WEN MCNEIL** of Wells River, owner of the Underwood that Wells had been excited to spot. Like the other eight or nine visiting Type-In attendees, McNeil wanted to sample different machines — such as a 1964 Sears model that produces exclusively stilette text. "I'm going to try to get to all of them," he said, tapping away. "It's nice to hear this noise and not have me be the only one creating it."

McNeil's typewriter-collecting habit started a decade ago and "took hold," he now has about 20 machines. A self-confessed "bit of a Luddite," he was attracted to the old typewriters' "aesthetic, the mechanical feel," though he admitted he has to "invent reasons" to use them. (Many attendees cited personal letter writing as a prime opportunity to use their typewriters.)

While some came just to type and talk, others hoped to get a vintage machine back up to speed. Repair help was on hand in the form of **SAUL CARLSON**, who made a striking entrance with a 1947 Underwood Standard strapped to the back of his yellow bike.



Seven friends learn typewriter basics at the first of Mayhew Café.

Once disassembled, he swapped a second treasure: a 1960s Royal Prestige that folds "as small as an book." Carlson noted, thanks to a supplier's machinations.

A machine biologist about to embark on a doctorate, Carlson runs a baby-business called **Snaford**, offering \$10 vintage typewriter tune-ups. People come from neighboring states for his hard-to-find services, he said — not to mention supplies such as the 300 ribbon he bought from a typewriter shop before it went out of business.

Carlson's own interest in the machines began when he wanted to write old-school letters, and "My handwriting sucked," he said. He discovered that the "fluidity" of typing improved his "sentence gymnastics." Not to mention his digital dexterity — when Wells held the afternoon's typing contest, Carlson won handsily with 42 words per minute.

While some of the Type-In attendees were old enough to remember when

BURLINGTON TYPE-IN: MARGOT HARRISON



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LUKE HOWARD

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Burlington 'Type-In' BY ERIC

Manual typewriters were the only way to produce a readable poem or letter page, often were digital natives who'd never experienced them purely as functional machines. Fifteen-year-old **COLLEEN RAY** of Monkton, a nascent creative writer, said she was drawn to the historical association embodied in a quote often attributed to Hemingway about writing: "All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed."

Right-year-old **CHUCK HAVEL** of Underhill came to the event with his room, **WOLF**, who and her son types every day on his favorite Olympia — an "unlabeled" activity that she's happy to encourage. The idea didn't originate with the parents, though. "I like campfire stories," Derek explained. When he saw his first typewriter — "I think

Type-In by chance. She settled at a table with her 2029 Beethoven — sporting a man-two-man body — and her two young children, who based themselves tagging on the carriage and tapping the keys.

The Beethoven gave a tangled ribbon, and Carlson offered his services. "This is my lucky day!" said Poles, a recent winner of the prestigious Graywolf Press Notification Prize. She didn't grow up with typewriters, she said, but likes what they do for her writing: "When I sit and type, it's more conducive to how I think through a sentence. It slows down the process."

These "obsolete" machines, it seems, are many things to many people — aids to creating, intriguing objects, pieces of history. Along with one of his inquiries, Wells was psyched to discover an



maybe online — he thought "It looked like it would be cool to have one."

Wells said he likes to show his typewriters to his elementary schoolers, who are "fascinated with them." He taught his first one for his daughter, only to have her sister demand one, too. Now he has 11 or 12, most from sources like Goodwill and antique shops, ranging in price from \$60 to \$150. A plethora of typewriters can be found on eBay, of course, but sellers "love to know how to send them," Wells cautioned, to avoid damage to moving parts like the carriage.

AMBER PALM, a writer and editor who works upstairs from Maglietta at **RAVING INTO HOUSES**, stumbled upon the

INFO vermontmagtypewriter.blogspot.com

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Dear Cecil,

I recently reread Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. In his chapter on ice ages, he says geologists believe the Earth has had numerous glaciation events, we're currently in an interglacial period and we're likely due for another round of ice. Bryson also writes that global warming could paradoxically accelerate the next glaciation, although no one really knows. I was wondering: what impact would global warming have on an impending ice age?

Ken Chang, North Kingstown, R.I.

This one's easy. As a result of global warming, the next ice age in all likelihood has been postponed until further notice. Bunk in that thought for a moment. OK, time's up! What we may get instead could be worse — not just droughts and hurricanes, but wildfires from hell.

In the 1990s, scientists thought the next ice was going to arrive, if not imminently, at least disconcertingly soon — possibly within 1,500 years. Absent geological and climatological evidence showed the Earth had experienced many ice ages, the most recent of which concluded about 10,000 years ago. Warm periods, or interglacials, typically lasted about 10,000 years (I'm going the simplified version of this). You see the rub of the problem right there.

Modern humans managed to survive the last ice age, but the experience was brutal

The apocryphal eye folds, fatter facial features, and comely bodies typical of today's ant-Arctics are thought to be the result of having been trapped behind the glaciers. Unprotected eyes, prominent noses, and long limbs were an adaptation to frostbite and death.

The entirety of what we now think of as civilization was created during the current interglacial — in the grand scheme, an astonishingly short period of time. The thought that this hospitable era was drawing to a close gave scientists of the time the willies. Yeah, we'd gotten through it before, and we'd get through it again. But chance, at what cost — back to the cave?

Thanks to global warming (hey, we can now put this grim prospect behind us), in a 2013 report, the National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee, convened by the U.S. Department of Commerce, declared that

"humans have so altered the composition of the atmosphere that the next glaciation has now been delayed indefinitely."

To be fine, and not instrumental nature, now control our destiny. That's not necessarily good.

I pause to acknowledge here that, like everyone else who isn't determined to ignore the evidence, I buy the overall contention that human activity effects climate — not just now, but throughout history.

Mostly we've warmed things up. Cutting down forests and draining wetlands for agriculture may have forestalled an ice age about 5,000 years ago. (To simplify again, deforestation added carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.) Soot produced by burning wood, coal and other fuels coated ice and snow, causing them to melt faster. This phenomenon is thought to be responsible for ending the Little Ice Age, a colder-than-average period from 1350 to 1800, which in turn had been triggered by the reforestation of Europe after farms were abandoned in the wake of bubonic plague.

For global warming in principle, we'll not. What's different is that we're pumping CO₂ into the atmosphere at a greater rate than before, with unpredictable consequences. In his book, Bryson speculates that greater warming would increase cloud cover, cooling the planet. Others posit that as the ice

sheets melt and temperatures rise in the northern latitudes, the amount of vegetation will increase, resulting in reduced atmospheric carbon dioxide and, again, more cooling.

Still others believe a sudden addition of melted fresh water into the oceans could disrupt critical ocean currents, such as the Gulf Stream, and lead to much colder temperatures in the north and the retreat of the glaciers. One such event occurred more than 8,000 years ago, when a giant glacier melted water late in the middle of North America drained into the ocean and triggered a chilling of the northern hemisphere by more than 3 degrees Fahrenheit.

Change may occur even in the absence of interglacial events. Global-warming data (a daunting task, from what I can tell) have made much of the harsh winters of the past couple of years in the U.S. Northeast and Midwest. Granted, two cold seasons don't a long-term trend make. However, a few years ago I analyzed Chicago weather data for late spring (May 15 through June 15) from 1950 to 2009 and found two things. First, year-to-year temperature variation, modest in the 1950s and '60s, increased after 1968 and since



1977 has been characterized by sharp swings. Second, on average, late springs in Chicago now are about 4 degrees cooler than in 1950.

Does that mean the glaciers are about to return? No, but we're pumping enormous amounts of energy into a system with few safety valves. That that cause the disturbance of the petroleum that powered polar air into northern cities, causing the recent catastrophic winter in Boston? I'd be hell-to make such a claim now. Only in hindsight will we be able to say: That was the year the future arrived.

INFO

If there's something you need to get straight? Dear Adams can deliver the Straight Dope on any topic. Write Cecil Adams at The Chicago Reader, 1111 N. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60610, or cead@chicagoreader.com.

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Hilton Garden Party

I was my first pickup at Burlington's newest hotel — the Hilton Garden Inn. Though it's been in operation for months, I'm surprised how few locals know of its existence. I think that's because the bulk of the property is not on street level but tucked into the interior of the block behind existing buildings.

I remember watching the zoning department hearings when the project was in its planning stage. They were broadcast on cable access TV and seem to have gone on for years, though that sounds outlandish now that I say it.

Not that the lengthy deliberation was unjustified. City officials recognized that this hotel would represent a significant alteration of the downtown cityscape, and they were determined to get it just right before granting the requisite approvals. Their resolve of adhering this appeared to involve the endorsement of the builders and their architects. I couldn't see why that bureaucratic process captured my attention, but I raved in to caution about it.

And after all that hoopla, here was the hotel, finished and gleefully taking business. It was just before noon on a sunny morning when I pulled onto the wide driveway adjacent to the old city armory, and up to the hotel entrance. Two people, a man and a woman, stood out front with their bags. "Are you Joe Gosselin?" I asked the man as I stepped out of my taxi.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "We're going to the airport. It seems the hotel scheduled us for the shuttle, unbeknownst to me. But we're still taking you, and I believe the hotel will pay for it if you give them a message."

"Well, that would work," I said. "Let me go on and check with the front desk to confirm that."

I couldn't find the door, which left me feeling like a *doofus*. I just stood there facing a wall of large windows artfully streaked in white scumgles, and searching for a clue. Wincing my confusion, the woman chuckled and said, "Yeah, it's tricky. The door is over here on the left. Just walk up to it, and it'll slide open."

I did just that, and a dill! Once inside, I climbed the few steps into the lobby, and the suitcase put the front desk clerk. She said, "I really need to check with the manager and he's away just now."

"No problem," I said. "I'll return after I drop your guests at the airport."

On the ride to the airport, I chatted with my customers. They were in town for an insurance conference. I asked, "Was it, perchance, concerning captive insurance?"

Joe said, "As a matter of fact, it was. I'm impressed you know about that. It's pretty obscure if you're not in the business."

"Oh, it was just an educated guess," I said. "Vermont invented captive insurance, or at least pioneered the legal structures that made it easy to set up such a business in our state. Through the years, I've driven many insurance people to conferences of the sort, and they told me about it."

I dropped my folks at the terminal and headed back to the hotel to clean my runway. On the ride downtown, my intuition had something to say.

"Jeez, grrr."

"Oh, great," I replied. "What now?" "I don't like your attitude. Anyway, I just want to let you know that you're in for a hassle at the hotel. Be prepared!"

"Well, thanks for sharing," I said. "However, you happen to be wrong. I know how you think you're infallible, and I should always follow you, blish, blish, blish. But just pay attention when we get to the Hilton. Live and learn my friend!"

It's not a good sign when you get poisonous-aggressive and argumentative with your own instincts. It doesn't bode well.

I reached the hotel, parked and successfully found the door and stride in confidently. The same woman was at the front desk. I said to her, "I think a receipt could you get the manager so I can get paid?"

She glanced at me, a slightly stricken look on her face. She signaled over the manager. "That cabbie's back! I overheard her whisper to him."

The manager — clean-cut, spiffy and professional — said to me, "This is not something we normally do, but let me check. Who was the guest you transported?"

The ladies on my back rose. Mrs. Hackles. My hacker ladies.

"Look, I don't really care what you 'normally' do, because I've been at this for more than 30 years. If you drop your guests to the airport, and they told me you would pick up the first kind of story."

I wasn't exactly riding at the pike, but my voice had just that edge you would imagine.

"Sir," he said calmly. "No need to get testy. I just need the name of the guests."

I told him Joe Gosselin and some other lady — I don't know her name — and he returned to a back room to check. God knows what. That left me and the front desk clerk.

Amazement went by with my mouth actually saying, I said, "You know, this is ridiculous. We're talking about a lousy 15 bucks here! Every hotel I've ever dealt with would make good on this tale without delay!"

"Sir, there's no need to get rule with me."

THE HACKLES ON MY BACK ROSE. YES, HACKLES. MY HACKIE HACKLES.

I said, "You're right. I'm sorry" but my tone was not entirely apologetic, and I was making everything in these situations. Anyone can speak the right words.

The manager returned, counted the money from the till and handed it to me, a stiff smile on his face. He also had me sign a separate receipt. I thanked him and took off.

I took another hour before I came to my senses and thought, Oh, what a jerk I am. And, by the end of the day, I realized I should go back and apologize, maybe even armed with chocolate. Nothing says, "I'm sorry" like a bag of accoutrements. Like Ghoslen's Chocolates. I speak from experience.

Words went by, and I kept forgetting to return to the hotel. Now too much time has elapsed, the apology window has closed. But I am still considering an apology in my intention. Which, by the way, is always right. ☺

All these stories are true, though names and locations may be altered to protect privacy.

INFO

Hackles is a twice a month column that comes out on Wednesdays past. Come to us early, or write to hackles@journalismportage.com.



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CASHING OUT?

Vermont mulls the pros and cons of privatizing state liquor sales

BY KEN PICARD & DATA ANALYSIS BY HILARY HILES

The Vermont Department of Liquor Control warehouse in Montpelier buzzed with activity as heaping forklifts loaded cases of liquor into the back of a large truck on the Wednesday before Memorial Day weekend. Workers were busily restocking Vermont's 80 state-controlled liquor stores in anticipation of the unofficial start of summer, which historically coincides with a statewide uptick in alcohol consumption.

Warehouse manager Barry Richardson, who's worked at DLG for nearly 25 years, managed the traffic flow. On average, four trucks leave the warehouse four times a day, each hauling about 1,000 cases—or enough liquor for four stores, he said. State employees deliver to most outlets every other week, though Vermont's busiest liquor stores, such as Beverage Warehouse in Winooski and Burlington's Pearl Street Beverage, get weekly shipments.

Has Richardson's job changed much since the 1990s?

"A ton," he said, adjusting a case of Absolut vodka bound for the truck. "[We carry] way more booze."

Indeed, this warehouse regularly stocks more than 1,000 different items sold in Vermont liquor stores and another 1,200 to 1,500 specialty orders that come from bars, restaurants, liquor store owners and their customers. The inventory is organized not by liquor type or brand but by the products that move the fastest; the biggest sellers are stacked, five to ceiling, along the outside walls for easier access. These coveted spots can change from year to year, reflecting Vermonters' shifting tastes for spirituous beverages.

"Rakia used to be our fastest mover. For a while, that was our passion on the security system," Richardson recalled. "Right now, Knob Creek is pretty hot. Bulleit Bourbon is also flying." (For a list of Vermont's top-selling brands, see facing page.)

Anyone who's ever had a margarita, Manhattan or rum hit in the Green Mountains State has drank from the river of booze that

flows through this warehouse, the only one of its kind in the state. Vermont is one of 17 "control states" in which selected state officials direct the distribution and sale of all high-proof spirits—vodka, gin, rum, whiskey, tequila, etc. Liquor manufacturers own every bottle in this "bottled warehouse" until it ships out, at which point the DLG pays for it.

That bottle arrives at a state liquor outlet, or "agency," where it belongs to the state—not the merchant who stocks it—until a customer purchases it. As most Vermont booze buyers quickly discover, that transaction goes through a separate, state-owned cash register, which is different from the one used to ring up beer, wine, chips and other groceries. The state's archaic, DOS-based machines still rely on dial-up internet connections to process credit and debit card transactions, which can be ponderously slow and a pain account for the long lines of customers waiting to check out.

Some suggest this byzantine business model could be made more efficient and lucrative for the state by allowing private industry to take it over. State Auditor Doug Hefner says it's time for an "honest conversation" about whether the control-state model is really the best way to sell liquor in Vermont. He also sees an inherent conflict of interest in the DLG's mission to both promote liquor sales and restrict its availability.

"It's not one to advocate for privatization at all. I think government has an important role to play in many areas of our lives," said Hefner's Progressive. "But I struggle to find a justification for the sale of liquor as a core function of state government. I just don't see it."

Liquor DLG commissioner Michael Hagan countered that the control-state model actually provides Vermonters with "the best of both worlds": by carefully controlling how powerful spirits are sold while also keeping prices affordable and availability limited. He suggested that the allure of leaving private industry to take over liquor sales and distribution in order to make more money will only create more problems, from market over-saturation to alcohol abuse.

"Privatization is always percolating in the background and it's percolating even now when the state has more revenue needs," Hagan said. "Now that the state has been dealing with deficits year after year, they're looking to fill in holes. But I think that's the biggest mistake Vermont could make."



TOP 10 BOTTLES OF THE YEAR

- 1 Crown Royal Vodka (0.75 L.)
- 2 Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 Black (0.75 L.)
- 3 Captain Morgan Original Spiced Rum (0.75 L.)
- 4 Five O'Clock Vodka PET (0.75 L.)
- 5 Jameson Irish Whiskey (0.75 L.)
- 6 Absolut Vodka (0.75 L.)
- 7 Dr. McGillicuddy's Fireball (0.75 L.)
- 8 Smirnoff Red Label Vodka (0.75 L.)
- 9 Smirnoff Vodka (0.75 L.)
- 10 Grey Goose Vodka (0.75 L.)



FROM MOONSHINE TO \$18 MILLION

It's easy to forget that, for much of its history, booze-loving Vermont was a dry state. From 1832 until 1839, it was illegal to sell hard alcohol in the Green Mountains, though local moonshiners and smugglers supplied Vermonters during the Prohibition years.

In 1833, when the 21st Amendment nixed the Volstead Act, Vermont was one of 37 states, along with jurisdictions in Alaska, Maryland, Minnesota, and South Dakota, that chose to adopt a control model to regulate alcohol. Although each state's system differed somewhat, the common denominator was that the state owned the liquor at some point in the purchasing process.

In 1948, Vermont created the DLC to oversee the sale and distribution of all hard alcohol in the state. Surprisingly little has changed since then. Until 1986, Vermont owned and operated all its own liquor stores. In the ensuing decade, it began converting state-owned stores to privately licensed liquor "agents." The last ones remained in 1996.

Today, 80 agent retailers have exclusive contracts to sell liquor in their area. They offer the same sales on the same days, at prices listed in the DLC's statutorily mandated quarterly, 6029 spirits. Those prices cannot vary, regardless of the store's proximity to competitors just across the border in New Hampshire, New York or Massachusetts. Similarly, every restaurant, bar and nightclub pays the same price for a bottle of Jim Beam or Jack Daniels as the average Joe Vermonter.

Pro-privatization argue that liquor could easily be sold through the same business channels as beer, wine, coffee and other booze-proof beverages. Currently, Vermont has five major beer and wine distributors — Baker Distributing, Farnell Distributing, G. Brown and Colman Beverage — and three major private wholesalers,

which collectively sell to the more than 1,200 retail outlets statewide. Those stores range from small mom-and-pop to major national chains such as Walmart, Costco, Shaw's and Price Chopper.

Not everyone is convinced it's wise to cross with Vermont's spirit world. Some, including officials at the DLC itself, argue that Vermont's liquor control system works fine and doesn't need fixing. They contend that Vermont, like other control states, has done a better job than "open states" of reducing overconsumption and keeping high-proof spirits out of the hands of minors.

Moreover, privatization opponents also say that any financial benefits — notably, higher tax revenues reaped from greater liquor sales, the eliminated costs of staffing and maintaining a state warehouse, and the one-time windfall of selling off all its inventory — would be short-lived. They contend that such gains would be more than offset by other public health and safety costs, including higher rates of alcoholism, drunk driving and more emergency room visits.

Hogan points to Maine, which privatized its liquor wholesaling in 1994, and Washington, which fully privatized in 2002. In both states, their evidence that competition decreased, consumer prices increased, and many small retailers and urban distillers got squeezed out.

Vermont has considered privatizing before; the legislature mandated studies in the 1990s and again in 2004. The state paid \$50,000 for the last one, from Virginia-based Management Analysis Incorporated, which suggested ways of improving efficiency in the DLC's warehouse but made no recommendation to abandon the control-state model.

Auditor Hoffer decided to give the matter another look. Last November, he issued a report with the snappy title "Liquor Control System: Fiscal Impact of Privatization Projected as Neutral, but DLC Could

I STRUGGLE TO FIND A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SALE OF SPIRITS AS A CORE FUNCTION OF STATE GOVERNMENT.

DOUG HOFFER, AUDITOR

CORRESPONDENT: RYAN

*Note: The states are ranked by overall bottle sales, not the volume of alcohol sold. The states are ranked by overall bottle sales, not the volume of alcohol sold. The states are ranked by overall bottle sales, not the volume of alcohol sold.

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ILLUSTRATION: JIM

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Cashing Out? BY FR

Take Other Actions That May Increase Profits" Is it, Hoffer didn't come out for or against privatization, which may explain why lawmakers, and the press, greeted the report with a collective yawn.

But the analysis did raise a fundamental question: Is the sale of liquor a "core function" of state government, akin to planting streets and parking highways? If not, Hoffer suggested, then lawmakers should reconsider whether private industry can do the job about as efficiently and more profitably for taxpayers.

Doing so, Hoffer acknowledged, would leave a lot of cash on the barrel. In fiscal year 2014, the DEC took in nearly \$10 million in net liquor revenue, \$18 million of which went to the general fund, \$12 million to run its operations. Between 2005 and 2003, liquor sales at state-controlled stores contributed more than \$67 million to state coffers.

Although the report doesn't say so much, in a recent interview Hoffer pointed out that his office was "intentionally conservative" in its calculations of the fiscal impact of privatization. Hoffer said he didn't want to make any "bold or imprudent assumptions about what the future might hold" if liquor sales were privatized. But he suggested that liquor tax revenues could be significantly higher because private wholesalers and retailers would have more incentives to sell more bottles than state-controlled stores do now.

Part of the problem, Hoffer explained, is that owners of many state liquor outlets have little incentive to move their product, because that's not where they make most of their money. Most state liquor stores are located within larger retail outlets that also sell beer, wine and other groceries. Liquor is just another product to get customers in the door.

COP AND COMPETITOR

800 Beverage, Wine & Spirits is a relatively new state liquor retailer that opened last September in the Ethan Allen Shopping Center on North Avenue in Burlington. Formerly known as Neri's, it was previously located about a half mile north of its current location.

Shoppers can choose from an impressive selection of local, domestic and imported beers, wines, ciders and other alcoholic beverages. With more than twice the space of its old location, the store also has racks of domestic and imported wines.

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*By sales volume



For a complete listing of all state liquor outlets and their top-selling products visit www.ndayvt.com

The liquor bottles, meanwhile, are tucked away to one side of the store and segregated from the rest of the retail operation like the adult-movie section of a video store. There are no posters or other promotional material aggressively marketing spirits.

How do retailers like 803 Beverage get into the booze business? Basically, storeowners apply for a license to sell distilled spirits on their premises. Whether they receive DLC approval is based in part on their proximity to other agent stores and potential sales growth in that area. Hoffer and the DLC does market research to determine whether a new outlet will generate additional revenue for the state or simply pull

be measured objectively because no standards have ever been established. Nevertheless, in 2013, nearly three-quarters of the state's 76 clearing stores at the time earned income commissions totaling \$1 million. Contracts with state agents are initially awarded for one year at a time but can eventually increase to three- and five-year contracts. Hoffer characterized such arrangements as "entitlements," adding that, short of flagrant and repeated rule violations, "the people who have them are good for life."

At the same time, though, agent stores didn't have a lot of skin in the game, largely because they didn't own the liquor bottles on their shelves — those are owned by the state until a customer buys them — and thus have little incentive to aggressively turn inventory. While he doesn't think that most state

liquor agents do a poor job of selling spirits, Hoffer suggested there's little incentive for them to focus on their liquor operations over the rest of their retail business. "Return [on investment] is always — it has to be and should be in a capitalist system — a function of risk," he explained. "If something doesn't sell, you don't care, because it's not your money sitting on the shelf."

Hoffer sees "some inconsistency, if not hypocrisy" in the fact that the DLC already licenses private businesses to sell beer and wine. Except for restrictions on their hours of operation and the age of customers to whom they can sell, those businesses essentially can do whatever they want to move their products. As such, Hoffer sees no substantive difference between distilled spirits and other alcoholic beverages.

Following the same logic, he isn't convinced that increased liquor sales would automatically lead to greater social ills, such as more DUIs and overconsumption. "College students can go out and buy as much beer as they want and still fall out of a first-year window," he said. "I don't believe there's any

research that says that agents require greater control than beer and wine. There's no reason not to follow the beer and wine path and license it rather than control it."

Vermont grocers, club and tavern owners or restaurateurs are not choosing to promote liquor sales. Then again, some who acknowledge the benefits of switching to a primus model won't say so publicly because they're wary of involving the DLC's ire.

Most of the Vermont beer and wine distributors contacted for this story either didn't return calls or declined to comment on the record. But, as one suggested privately, "every distributor in the state" would jump at the opportunity to also sell booze, they already have the staff, trucks, delivery routes, franchise arrangements and retailer relationships. Nevertheless, this distributor wouldn't belly up to the bar and push that agenda publicly.

"We have to understand, they are one police," he explained, referring to the DLC and its enforcement authority. "And our police are also our competitors."

A SPIRITED DEFENSE

The DLC's administrative headquarters doesn't call attention to itself at the terminus of Green Mountain Drive in Montpelier, just beyond Green Mountain River's sular ponds. The interior is another story. Along with their family photos, many staffers proudly display Vermont-made products such as maple syrup, liquor, beer, 100% Glu, Winooski Cider and Shio vodka at their workstations.

For decades, the DLC attracted little attention or scrutiny from lawmakers or the press; it was more to rubber the legislation than the governor but in the ap-

pointed members of the Vermont Liquor Control Board. But, five months after Hoffer's report, the Burlington Press discovered the department had been making undocumented overtime payments to William Gaggins, the DLC's director of education, licensing and enforcement. That policy,

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Bogged Down

Off Trail: Exploring the state's lesser-known natural niches with the Vermont Center for Ecotudies

BY ETHAN DE SEIZE

Excuse me, I've got a fly in my mouth." Kent McFarland, conservation biologist at the Vermont Center for Ecotudies, politely pauses to expectorate one of the countless black flies that beseege him as he stands on the boardwalk at Molle's Benthic Bog.

Though probably the most numerous and noisome of all the organisms that dwell in this swampy, remote area, the black flies may be its least interesting. Look past them, and you'll find a fascinating ecosystem that scores entirely out of place in Vermont.

Even farlanders know that Vermont is rich in forest, farmland and montane habitats. But the state's 9,600 square miles contain great geological, ecological and biological diversity, with curious and extraordinary niches scattered everywhere. In this new monthly series, *Seven Days* joins the researchers at Newfield's Vermont Center for Ecotudies to explore some of those off the beaten track ecosystems.

For our first ecological excursion with VCE, McFarland suggested we visit this Northeast Kingdom bog, because it's unlike any other in the state. Nestled deep in the east, federally managed Solité O. Conte National Park and Wildlife Refuge, the 70-acre bog was named for the first female director of the U.S. Park and Wildlife Service. Benthic also served as deputy secretary of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, the final of her career in 1996 at the age of 69.

The Champion Paper Company once owned the forested land surrounding Benthic's swampy bog. In 1997, the company sold it to the federal government, which still permits responsible logging there. The roads that lead to the bog are lined with stacks of fragrant, recently harvested spruce.

In a nod to conservation, Champion constructed a simple (and boardwalk-accessible) wooden boardwalk that extends some 200 feet into the dense peat mat. From the boardwalk, one can easily see most of the bog's unusual natural features, although most of the informational signs have long since faded.

Most likely created some 10,000 years ago by the ongoing action of a peatbogging bog, the bog derives its water not from the nearby Nulhegan River but from rainfall and snowmelt. As aquatic plants



gradually spread out, died off and settled into sediment, the tannins released by their decay turned the bog's water more and more acidic. Soon a floating carpet composed mostly of sphagnum moss extended across the bog.

Today, that moss is dense enough to support the weight of thousands of black spruce trees that regally jut up everywhere, some more than 60 feet tall. McFarland estimates that some of them are 120 years old, and that the bog is so food poor that younger spruces will "starve themselves" for decades, waiting for older trees to die and free up valuable nutrients.

Like all of the bog's vegetation, the common black spruce and tamarack trees have evolved to survive in this challenging environment. So severely does it not favor that one can easily identify the "flee in the sand" that other native trees—birches, firs and other spruces—cannot cross, unimpeded as they are to cope with the water's low pH. "There's balsam fir along the edge, but as soon as it gets too acidic, it gets outcompeted by the black spruce," says McFarland.

The acidic peat soil is known as *podzol*—a term usually reserved for similar habitats in Canada and Alaska—and everything strange and wonderful

about the Molle's Benthic Bog can be traced back to its effects. Because the environment demands so much of its resident flora and fauna, those organisms evolve with a degree of specialization that renders them unable to survive beyond the bog's boundaries.

The bog abounds in various types of sedges, most of them thin and undistinguished grassy plants. Rare in Vermont, they're an important part of the bog's ecosystem. A showier type of sedge is the aptly named hare's-tail cottongrass. Back of its reedy stalks is topped with a fluffy white tuft. The breeze is slight on the day of our visit (yep, it's the only thing that moves off the black flies), but when it does nudge the cottongrass, the stellar snowy sway is mesmerizing.

As a bog novice, I'm first drawn to the plant that draws the most attention to itself. Many of the flowers of the early blooming *Achillea* (genetically and linguistically related to the *Madagascar*) have withered by the time of our early June visit, but plenty of its bright purple flowers remain, standing out like neon signs. But for those and a few other small exceptions—notably the tiny, sky blue spring anemone butterfly—the bog's color scheme runs to grays, greens, and everything strange and wonderful

be challenging, so I'm fortunate to have McFarland as a guide.

Even I, however, manage to spot the bog's flagship resident. The insectivorous pitcher plant, usually associated with the southern and western United States, is ubiquitous here. Many of the plants are robust enough to stretch their leaves into two-foot-diameter circles.

The pitcher plant is stiffy in an eighth-grade-science-class way, but there's much more to it, McFarland explains. In this highly unusual ecosystem, the pitcher plant creates its own unique micro environment.

"The cool thing about these pitcher plants — well, there's a lot of cool things about them — is that there's no whole little world inside that pitcher," McFarland says. "Inside the water, there's a mosquito that's specially adapted to survive that water. And there's a rotifer and other single-celled organisms that are breaking down stuff that falls in there. And there's an ant that feeds on a sweet liquid around the edge of the leaves. On top of that, there are fire ants that only feed on that plant. One of them feeds on the leaves, and one of them feeds on the roots underground."

As he discusses the plant's curious biology, McFarland becomes more and more passionate. This is exactly the kind of thing that fascinates the self-proclaimed "outdoor geek," whose name and voice may be familiar to listeners of Vermont Public Radio's "Outdoor Radio."

Though he can't wait to spend more time with plants, McFarland is most keen on the winged inhabitants of the bog. Nor do his — butterflies. Lepidoptera is his professional specialty, and he's skilled at withstanding, if you can, the rare-junta Arctic. This small, brown-gray butterfly resides in bog habitats but has rarely been spotted south of Canada.

The larvae of the pitcher Arctic feed on the bog's abundant algae, which grows in a nearly leafless. In this way, the insect is effectively a prisoner of its own ecological niche. "That thing has been trapped here since its cranium went north as the plants needed nourishment with the glaciers," McFarland says. "They kept going, following that habitat, and it stayed here on its little specklebits. They're stuck here."

Armed with binoculars, a camera with a dual zoom flash bracket, and undimittable optimism, McFarland trudges among the peaty hummocks in search of the tiny insect that's pretty much the same color as everything else in the bog. Soon enough, he spots a pair of them, twisting about in a midair mating ritual. But the male pulls out a bigger catch



**AS A BOG NOVICE,
I'M FIRST DRAWN TO THE
PLANT THAT DRAWS THE MOST
ATTENTION TO ITSELF.**

of the day. As McFarland photographs the first pair, I notice another couple of insects alighting on a short high branch of a small black spruce. They don't fly off as I approach, and I soon learn why. This is a mating pair, and the creatures are so wrapped up in their entomological nookie that nothing disturbs them.

This is pay dirt for McFarland, who can barely believe our good fortune. So far as he knows, he says, no one has ever photographed a mating pair of pitcher Arctic butterflies. For the next 20 minutes, he and a Seven Days photographer inside the insects' arboreal bedroom to snap images after images.

Meanwhile, I stick about in the rubber boots I've been advised to wear,

testing the resilience of the spunky carpet of moss. I have a much richer understanding of this peculiar ecosystem than I did an hour earlier, but nothing eclipses away its essential strangeness. A two-and-a-half-hour drive away, at roughly the same latitude, unfiltered and serene, have pushed through the smoky veil of my backyard, which is visited by nothing more unusual than hummingbirds and skunks.

Hard to believe I'm in the same state. ☺

This is the first in an occasional series of stories in which Seven Days joins researchers from the Vermont Center for Ecosystems in exploring some of Vermont's lesser-known ecosystems.

Contact: erhart@vermontdayst.com

INFO

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MUSIC

As iconic gospel shows go, Mavis Staples is one humble lady. In a recent 28-minute interview with *Seven Days*, she repeatedly returned to one theme in particular: how grateful she is for, well, pretty much everything, including her memory, her music, her friends, her time with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and, most of all, her late father, Pops Staples.

Indeed, the 75-year-old Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee has had much to be thankful for of late. She's just released a stirring new EP with up-and-coming young singer and producer Son Little, *Your Good Fortune*. Earlier this year, with the help of Wilco's Jeff Tweedy and his son, Spencer, Staples realized an album some 15 years in the making: the final, posthumous Pops Staples album *Don't Leave This*.

In the years leading up to those achievements, Staples enjoyed something of a career renaissance with two Tweedy-produced albums: *One True View* in 2010 and *You Are Not Alone* in 2012. The latter album scored her a 2011 Grammy Award for best Americana album. Incredibly, it was her first Grammy win, coming 51 years after she began her career as a member of the Staple Singers in 1960.

With that group, Staples became a musical and cultural force. Rooted in gospel traditions but achieving mainstream crossover success, the Staple Singers—who also included her father, brother and two sisters, in various iterations—were arguably the most popular spiritually based musical act in American history. They were also the most culturally important. Owing to Pops' friendship with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose the group accompanied at rallies and speeches all over the country, the Staple Singers were the musical voice of the American civil rights movement.

In advance of Staples' headlining performance at the Burlington Discovery Jazz Festival on Friday, June 12, *Seven Days* spoke with her by phone from Chicago to talk about her recent albums, her remarkable life story and that time some scruffy kid named Bob Dylan asked to marry her.

Fortunate Daughter

Mavis Staples on Pops, the Grammys and turning down Dylan

BY DAN BOBLES

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SEVEN DAYS: I was tickled to see that Sam Little produced your new record. He's great. How did you two get together?

MAVINS STAPLES: Andy Kaufman [head of Anti-Record Labs] was here, and we were trying to figure out where I should go next. He had some videos on his phone he started playing. And I let them all go past until he got to Sam Little. I said, "Wait a minute, Andy. Who is that?" And he said, "See Little." I crinkled up and started prying him about the name.

But this kid has so much soul in his voice. We met after a show in New York, and we sat in a car and talked. He sent a song called "Your Good Fortune," and I loved it. Three weeks later, he sent "Papa," and I said, "Oh, my God." I was crying this because I loved the song so much. I'm just crazy about Sam Little.

SD: With good reason.

MS: I don't see him enough, though. He was supposed to be in Austin, Texas, when they did the premiere of my documentary [Mavin], released in 2005. I thought I was going to see him there, but I think he got lost in the parking and I missed him. [Laughs.]

SD: That's easy to do in Austin. Speaking of the documentary, was it a surreal experience to see your life on the big screen?

MS: Yes! I didn't think I was going to go see that. I don't even like to listen to my records with other people. I said, "I can't sit in that movie theater and watch myself on the screen." But it was so happy and so interesting. I was all in it. I thought it came out really, really nice. I can't wait for my friends to see it.

SD: You've told your story many, many times. And it seems like you are asked a list about the same things over and over. Is there anything people don't ask you that you wish they would?

MS: So sometimes I get new questions. But it's really OK. I'm just glad I remember everything! [Laughs.] I've just so grateful that my memory is so good. As I tell those stories, I can still see us.

To me it's more that I'm seeing all the time. And I'm glad about that.

SD: Well, it's a great story. So you have the new EP and the records with Jeff Tweedy. But I imagine being able to put together Don't Lose This was uniquely satisfying. MS: Oh, my God. Actually that was supposed to be the Staple Singers' last recording. And it is, because we're singing background for Pope. But when we learned Pope was sick, we said, "Let's let Daddy do this. Let's let this be Daddy's album."

There were some guys when he wasn't playing like he usually would, or he left some empty spaces. And this is what I needed. Thereby for, to reveal it.

After Pope passed [in 2003], there was nothing on the radio from any of us, from me, from the Staple Singers. I didn't know where to go. But then I got started again, and I said, "Well, now I can get Pope's music out. I've made some headway." I hadn't let anyone hear it for 15 years. But I knew what I had to do.

We were home one night [before Pope passed], and Pope said, "Mavin, being the music, let me hear it." So I took it to his room and left. After a while I went back to see how he liked it. He said, "hahaha, was very soft." "Mavin, don't lose this." That was his last request to me.

I play it every day. But on Father's Day, I'm gonna play it loud as can be, and me and Pope are gonna celebrate. Yes, indeed.

SD: Switching gears, I was surprised to learn that you won your first Grammy fairly recently. I figured you would have won at least one before now.

MS: That was amazing. The first time we were nominated, the one we felt like we should get. "Till Take You There" (1972), that record was the biggest record of the year, almost for two years. When they said, "And the winner is... Pope Till a Better Place." We just went. But my father told us, "Listen, you all hold your heads up. I don't want you sad!" for not winning a Grammy. A Grammy is not what you're singing.

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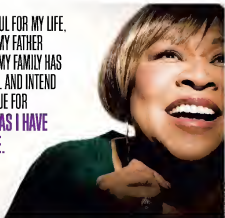
After that, I just got the Grammy out of my mind. Because, just like Pop said, that was not what I was singing for.

So when I was up [for a Grammy] in 2011, I didn't really want to go. But I went, and the guy who was announcing was that guy [Bobby] McFerrin, the guy who sings that [sings] "Don't worry be happy" [laughs]. So I said, "Oh, Lordy! That's him, ain't that?" When he called my name, I got weak in the knees. I just couldn't believe it. But I'm just grateful that, before I leave this world, I have my one Grammy. And that's good enough for me.

Q: Well, it took 'em long enough.
MS: It sure did! Just like Pop said, "You're not singing for no Grammy." And he was right. And I'm still not singing for no Grammy. Tweedy said I was nominated again. And I was hoping they'd let Tweedy win. But he couldn't.

I'M GRATEFUL FOR MY LIFE,
FOR WHAT MY FATHER
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comes up against that guy ... Bernard?
Bernard?

SD: Phew!

MS: Yeah! He was coming with [sings]
"I'm so happy" [Laughs] I said, "All this
happiness and we can't win, Twenty!"

SD: I love that you call him "Twenty."
MS: I had. "Don't worry, be happy," and
he had that. Maybe Son Little can win.
I can't wait to hear his album. Have you
heard this one "O Mother?"

SD: Oh yeah.

MS: Oh, my God. There's so much
truth in it. They need to be playing that.
With so much going on, they need to be
playing that.

You know, I'm looking at the world
seeing the '60s all over again. When I
see the news — these young men, young
black men and white men too, they
need to hear "O Mother."

**SD: The opening line of the song
almost seems like a callback to the
studio singers' song "Why" (Are I
Treated So Bad?).**

MS: Yeah! There's so many good lines in
there. He's telling such a truth. [Sings]
"O mother, why do they treat me like
I'm not a man?" And that's the way it's
going today. It like when he says, "O
mother, you taught me how to behave."
I haven't heard that word, "believe," in
I don't know when. I said, "This dude is
country."

**SD: Songs like "Why" (Are I Treated
So Bad?) are just as relevant now as
they were 40, 50 years ago. On the
one hand, it's a testament to their
staying power. But on the other, it
means that things haven't really
changed all that much.**

MS: No, No, they haven't. Like I said,
I'm seeing the '60s all over again. I've
known it for a while. We didn't finish.
Dr. King didn't finish. There's so much
more to be done. But since that time,
we've had so many leaders, no one
speaking up. I've always tried to keep
in my music. That's the only way I can
help, to sing a song about it.

That song turned out to be Dr. King's
favorite song. We used to sing before

he would speak. And Dr. King would
tell Papa, "Now, Staples, you're gonna
sing my song tonight, right?" And Papa
would say, "Oh, yes, Doctor. We're gonna
sing your song."

So I tell you, I'm grateful for my life,
for what my father and what my family
has stood for. And intend to continue for
as long as I have my voice. I'm going to
keep my father's legacy alive. He started
this. He started it all. And when he saw
Dr. King, start Dr. King, he said, "Listen,
y'all. I like this man. And I think if he can
preach it, we can sing it." And we haven't
stopped.

**SD: Amen to that. Last question:
Do you ever wonder how your life
might've been different if you had
sued yes to Bob Dylan?**

MS: [Laughs] Yes! Oh, yes. I wonder
about that. Recently I've been
wondering about it more and more.
But I've often wondered, What if I had
married Bobby? Because I did like him
a lot. Where would I be today, if we'd
had some 100,000 children and we
had three or four? We would have had a

group, the Dylan Staples, or whatever
we'd have called 'em.

SD: That'd be a heck of a band.

MS: I tell you, that I often wonder where
we would be today had I married Bob
Dylan. I think we would have done
OK. We were both young. But that
was the thing. I was too young. I told
him, "Bobby, I don't know how to be
married. My older sister's not even
married yet." And that was the thing —
with a black family period. The older
sister has to get married first. But the
thought of marriage scared me. I was 18,
39 years old.

But we stayed friends. When we run
into each other, we talk. And I tell him,
"Hay, play!" And he says [crackles voice],
"Mama, I'm not a player." And I say, "Oh,
yes, you are." [Laughs] You, indeed. ☺

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An Italian butcher and an American chef find common ground at Aciridja Farm

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n the sheer drizzle of an unseasonably cool late-May evening, Alessandra Bellini stood amid her bags. A massive sow snorted over, pushing her nose through the gate. Of

much in our first practice," she said, inspecting each carcass from the inside out, cutting through muscle and tendon, fat and bone, allows her to see how her studies in ovine nutrition and breeding manifest in meat form.

And, while the formula-fed pastured fowls filled with vegetation, non-GMO feed and lots of affection, Raffin's bottom line is quality meat. While she offers much of that for sale at the Burlington and Jericho farmers markets, she reserves some for a monthly Sunday night supper club. It's

THE ROOM COMES
ALIVE DURING
THESE MEALS.

ALESSANDRA BELLIANI

the dance
or so people
crowded into the
no-air barn, must
red away from

the boat, but one man reached down and gave her pink nose a hearty scratch. The animal snorted and squealed with pleasure. "That's the mating pen," Reford said. "They're in there getting... serviced."

The petite pig farmer's 20 breeding sows — along with two boars, a modest flock of sheep and a harem of chickens — represent the basis of Agriculture Farm, which moved from leased land in Chittenden County to a permanent home in Putnam in June 2014.

The operation began as a homestead project five years ago, but the Agrilab breed now produces about 80 piglets annually. Baffin — who grew up in Italy and learned meat cutting in Tuscany — butchers most of the animals himself at the Mud River Food Hub in Willsford.

private, but anyone can join. Along with a chance to meet the rest, Map's \$70 membership fee included a five-course farm dinner and discounts on Agricola meat and any upcoming workshops.

This is a horror story as the farm to participate in that dinner, which Ballian hunted last winter with Barthelemy, based chief Richard Witting—principle at Wulff Carrington and formerly of "Dinner" (Dinner) and Jack Stepp: Club.

The dinner club's story mirrors that of the farm itself. Ballian is a clinical psychologist and treated associate professor at the University of Vermont. Neither she nor her husband, Charles Ballian, who emigrated from Argentina to Meadows in William, planned to become farmers. But lacking a source for reliably good Italian pork products, Ballian started raising pigs—and chickens and turkeys on the way.

"I wanted to bring back flavors from my homeland because I was missing it."

JOURNAL OF A CHINESE WOMAN

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SIDEdishes

BY STEVE BRANT & HANNAH PALMER EGAN



Eggplant, tomatoes

Special Sauce

AN ITALIAN MARKET COMES TO STONE

When **STONE** started its first told Stone Days about her plans for **STONE** market, back in March, she described a boozey take-out joint dishing quality Italian food just like Grandma used to make it. Now after a few last-minute delays — Herbert delayed briefly over Memorial Day weekend, then closed to work out a few kinks — the vision is a reality. Located at 407 Mountain Road in Stone, Stone officially opened for business on Friday, June 5.

The shop stocks Italian market essentials (bark, pesto, olive oil, bread) and also prepared dishes such as chicken Parmesan and eggplant rollatini by the pound. Customers can also find ingredients to enhance their home cooking. One popular creation that Stone wants in containers is "Sunday gravy": Herbert and her staff simmer Italian sausage, brussels, beef bones and mushrooms for hours until the flavors blend into a hearty



Stone market shelves

sauce. "It was typically made in Italian family homes on Sundays," Herbert explains, "hence the name."

Herbert, a New Jersey native, now makes countless weekend trips to her resident Italian market for family meals, and hopes that Stone will provide a similar experience in Vermont. "It's great for people who are always working and just want to grab something to bring home, or for people who are just up [at Stone] for the weekend," she says.

In Stone's earliest stages, Herbert reached out to Joe Leone, a local legend who owns an Italian specialty store in her hometown. He quickly became a mentor figure. Drawing on Leone's *outside fare*, Herbert offers homemade accessories and buying sandwiches such as the Italian Stallion, a stack of Genoa salami, Cappy ham, soppressata, mortadella, tomatoes and banana peppers. To busy patrons, "Hot Pints" backs up the heat with hot pepper relish, hot coppa, bianco d'oca and provolone picante.

Though drinking is not permitted on-site, Stone sells 16 Italian wines by the bottle. The assortment of reds, whites and prosecco selected by Herbert's sommelier friend spans a price range of about \$10 to \$55.

Stone is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. While tucked in the main venture, customers who have trouble waiting for dinner can sit and snack at tables inside or on the deck.

— S.B.

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Anatomy of a Dinner

BY PAUL

Raffini told *Seven Days* by phone last week. "I couldn't go another year without eggs. Then things kind of spiraled out of control."

She hosted dinner parties with friends and family, but "almost felt guilty," she recalled. "We were eating such good food, and our animals are treated so humanely. But we didn't get to share it with anybody [outside of] our circle of friends." When people kept asking to buy the meat, Raffini said the decision to go commercial made itself.

She and Hubbard built the business on leased land in Hinesburg, Mainland and Whiston. Five years in the farm was supporting itself. They qualified for financing from the Vermont Economic Development Authority and the USDA Farm Services Agency in Middlebury, and bought the Putnam farm last summer.

Raffini was most interested in the property — 60 acres of fertile, rolling farmland — and the aqueous, solid barn. But the 1850s farmhouse was perfect for entertaining. "This beautiful house had two dining rooms connected to this modern kitchen," Raffini said, "and I was like, OK. This is it."

In the barn prior to the May dinner, Raffini walked her guests through an historical layers of farm history.

This section of the building — still whitewashed and splashed with cow manure — is original, she said, that over there, with long, corrugated metal floors, is where they raise cattle where the old barn burned. Raffini and her neighbors — many of them involved with the property at one time or another — have lived here in with tributes from their own memories. "The family who



owned the farm before us lives in the next house over," Raffini said, pointing down the road. "The whole community knows this farm, so that's nice."

"But," she interrupted herself, "is anyone hungry?" The crowd responded with enthusiasm, and our host took her leave, leaving us to converse in the house shortly for dinner.

Walking back through the barn's long central corridor, the guests began to mingle. Two men discussed the preservation of agricultural properties from a structural standpoint. In the misty gloaming they wandered past the hops and chic beans, across the road and up the old stone steps into the house.

A Farmhouse Dinner

"Should I take my shoes off?" The query echoed through the foyer as each guest entered and became aware of his

or her muddy footwear. The question went unanswered. Soon we were all in stocking feet, taking our seats at two long tables set with sparkling bottles of San Pellegrino and many, many glasses — for tasting wine, water and spirits, and whatever beverages the guests chose to bring.

When Raffini and Waring launched the meal series four months ago, they planned for about 20 guests. That number quickly expanded, filling both of the redwood dining rooms. But May's menu, themed "The Whole Beast From Tail to Tail," drew a smaller crowd. Many club regulars skipped the meal, which featured corn and jowls, tongue and heart, feet and fat. But as dinner began, guests chattered in gleeful anticipation of courses to come.

Raffini — who transformed from former butcher to graceful host with the

ANATOMY OF A DINNER: BY PAUL

SIDEdishes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A3

Under the Radar

CHEF JEAN LUC MATECAT
TO HELP LA PUERTA NEGRA

After going dark in January 2013, the space at 44 Main Street in Montpelier formerly known as the Black Door will rise again as LA PUERTA NEGRA (Spanish for "the black door") later this summer.

The spot owned by restaurateur CARLOS AZORIN, the new restaurant will night spot is not under the umbrella of former MONTPELIER TOWN HALL restaurant group, which has 11 eateries including four former locations and PIZZERIA in Stowe.

According to general manager JENNIFER AZORIN (a former The Alarm and co-owner of Montpelier's Black Spacer Records with Kimpie Lander), the new restaurant will serve inspired Latin American fare and craft cocktails, making through late night.

JEAN LUC MATECAT, owner of the B&B in NEWFANEVILLE, ARRIVE at the Edison Street & Sign and stored kitchen in Boston and Montpelier — will run the kitchen. Though he brings a lot of high end history to the table, Matecat says he plans to keep La Puerta Negra's food fun and affordable.

"It's a pretty funky, colorful spot," the chef says. "So we're trying to have that be the theme in terms of food and overall attitude." Though he's still sorting out the details, Matecat's "modern Latin" menu will pull from cuisines all over Latin America. Street snacks such as tacos, tostadas and empanadas will share the bill of fare with ceviches and heartier entrees, such as braised beef cheek in tomato jus. Matecat says he also plans to feature alpacas meat from CAS CACAO RAMA (with whose owners he recently wrapped up a book project) as a nod to the Andes, where

those animals are a common source of protein.

Beyond the bar, Matecat plans to hire Latin-inspired, house-trained cocktailers, such as Brazilian-style expatriates, in keeping with the speaking style.

A second-industry veteran, Matecat says, "Music is going to be a very, very big part of this place." He's working with a collective of local bookers to "cast a wide, large net to bring local artists and talent in."

Matecat and Matecat say La Puerta Negra will be open by July 4, when four-piece Latin soul band Moxi — all members of Burlington's Afroque — will play the first show. That opening happens to coincide with the capital's Independence Day celebration. "It will feel quite celebratory as far as the timing of things," Matecat says.

— H.R.E.



Jean Luc Matecat and Edson Hill owner Jennifer

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Fried chicken



In the dining room at AgriSole Farm

Crispy pig's head salad

Anatomy of a Dinner

BY PATT

removal of her boots—circled the room offering poetic poems of Anne-Guérin, a dark and bitter liquor belitting the evening's weather. "Feel free to leave whatever you want on the table," she said, proactively dispelling guilt over unfinished plates, then dashed back into the kitchen.

"Does anyone mind if I say grace before we start?" asked Kallie's neighbor, whom she invited after hearing his wife was away for the weekend. Though many at the table nodded their approval, he offered thanks in silence as air hosts delivered wooden shingles laden with Kallie's charcuterie and Wirtz's preserves.

A small jelly jar held tender bands of tongue meat suspended in collagen-rich tomato gelée. As we spooned the silky tonic into bread alongside wild-plum-and-black-mushroom consomme, grilled grapes and spring grape leaves

(served that day around the farm), and shared a peasanty pig's-head plate, conversations wove from the fare to food and culture to gardening to community. Wine flowed and personal stories found their way into the chatter.

Middlebury resident Judith Danforth, who with her husband, Fred Danforth, resurrected Danforth's Powder in 1973, talked about her plans to establish an edible forest garden at their Lincoln home.

Outside, the landscape faded from a curious blue to deep indigo. Kallie placed a dish of sautéed chicken breasts on the table and talked us through the wares—poured by Paul Gibson at Burlington's Dedalus Wine—and of food brief lessons in pork anatomy.

Before serving bowls of cabosse, Kallie explained how, lacking a defined neck, the pig's jaw flows into its belly and shares similar physiology. Unlike

price the just for its fat content and robust flavor. Mixed with egg and cheese, gnascione (often dubbed "Taco lasagna" by anglophone gastronomes) forms the basis of a traditional pasta carbapasta.

On this night, Witting tested whole egg polka into rounds of Bellini's hand-rolled semolina croissants. Guests moaned in delight as they feed the yolk from their membranes, feeding their hands with glowing pollen richness.

Such a pleasure would never fit in Italy — not because it's not good, but because there's not how it's done. "In Italy we are so narrow-minded," Bellini said via phone, days later. "It's not a fit. We don't do things like that. A lot of times Richard will say, 'Let's do this,' and I'll be like, 'No.' Why? Because we don't do things like that."

While native Italians still debate the correct way to make carbapasta, serving it with a yolk intact isn't part of the equation. But you sometimes see it that way in high-end New World kitchens like the ones in which Witting played his craft.

Such details testify to the post-modernist season that elevates Agnola's dinner from tasty to fascinating. When a Vermont chef persuades an Italian to make changes to one of her household's most iconic dishes, the resulting plate represents an emulsion for both cooks, who constantly trade student and teacher roles.

And while Witting — who is pursuing a food-focused anthropology degree at UVM — has spent much of his career working with world cuisines, he said the Agnola's collaboration is his first experience working with Italian tradition. Bellini is willing to check her son's fit impulses — sometimes — to create a living bit of life that houses this place and the people and animals that share here.

"We're not just trying to emulate traditional Italian food out of context," Witting said in an interview. A meal always begins with specific dishes and pairings, but incorporating Vermont's native ingredients using both cooks' culinary tool kits makes each meal an adaptation rather than homage.

"[The chef] is being its own thing," Witting said.

Bellini finds meaning in the discourse between her heritage and the place she's chosen to build her life. "I am the product of my past generations," she said, "but I've assimilated a lot from here."

Pasta-pasta, a salad of crisp greens, wild-dressed lamb's quarters (a common Vermont weed) and edible flowers came topped with a tangle of crisp shredded pig's ear. As my Italian will tell you, consuming a bit of grocery after complex carbohydrates kick-starts digestion, making way for the next course.

After feeding off slices of earthy Conchino sausage with creamy potatoes and lentils and several glasses of wine, we spooned through a debate, home-spiced pork cutlets cascaded in poultry (crustacean della Norma, or "granola pasta"). Our hosts joined us in us, lingered over coffee.

"It's nice to do this because pasta makes sense of the world," Witting said — the dinner party format allows open conversation between dining room and kitchen.

"You trust us," Bellini added, "and we make you things we think are great."

Full from the night's home-long gastronomic journey, guests and hosts chattered away long after the last plate was cleared, even though it was Monday and many of us had roles to drive before bed.

"I really think there's something special in this house," Bellini said later. "The room comes alive during these meals. People are sitting in this place where generations of large farming families sat before and talked about the landings and how to make it through. To have two full dining rooms full of that energy — it gives us a high energy time. Even when we work till midnight and afterwards," she paused a moment to find the words. "It's magical." ☺

Contact: hawth@sevendaysvt.com

INFO

In addition to the shared chef, Agnola's Farm will host family-friendly Farm to Fork events on Sunday mornings starting in mid to late June. agnolasfarmtofork.com

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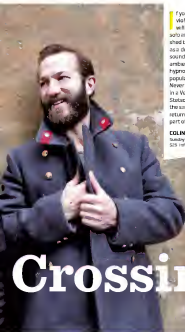
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Crossing

If you think you know the saxophone and violin, Colin Stetson and Sarah Neufeld will make you think again. Both successful solo artists, the Montreal-based musicians shed their indie-rock skins when performing as a duo. Together, they tap into complex soundscapes that explore jazz, classical, ambient, and electronic. Hunting and hypnosis, these instrumental compositions populate the recently released album *Never Were the Way She Was*. Recorded in a Vermont farmhouse, the record pairs Stetson's circular-breathing technique on the sax with Neufeld's violin loops. The two return to their musical stamping grounds as part of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival.

COLIN STETSON & SARAH NEUFELD DUO

Sunday, June 14, 8 p.m., at Hyatt Regency in Burlington
\$25 info: 855-6666, lynch.org

JUN 14 | MUSIC



Uncharted Waters

The name David Gray is synonymous with the album *White Ladder*. Recorded in the musician's humble apartment studio, the record was released in 1994 to critical acclaim, becoming a multiplatinum hit with seven million copies sold to date. Graced into the international spotlight, the British folk rocker faced the personal question, "Where do you go from here?" Today, Gray's answer is, "You have to sort of tear up the past and let it go." He does just that on *Masterplan*, a marked departure from his older work that has the singer-songwriter exploring new territory. This musical rebirth leads off the 2015 live & Jerry's Concerts on the Green series.

DAVID GRAY

Sunday, June 14, 8 p.m., at Silverburne Museum, \$35-40, info: 873-5871, highwaymusic.com

Bridging the Gaps

It's not the Tour de France, but the Vermont Green Fondo holds its own in the world of long-distance cycling. Modeled after European events, this second annual pedal challenges riders with a 103-mile course that climbs a collective 10,600 feet over the Appalachian, Lincoln, Brudenell and Middlebury gaps. Forty-mile- and 44-mile routes offer tamer versions of grueling ascents—the Lincoln Gap features the steepest paved mile in the country—and thrilling descents. Along the way, participants are rewarded with spectacular summer scenery as they cruise through verdant valleys before savored at Lincoln Peak Vineyard.

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Saturday, June 13, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., at Middlebury College Snow Bowl, \$30-120, free for specialists, info: 363-7630, ext. 333, vermontgreenfondo.com

An Eye for Detail

There must be something in the water. Anne Nezhukumatathil is drinking, as the poet is drunk for those when it comes to prize-winning publications. Beginning in 2001 with her collection *Wreck Point*, and most recently with her aptly titled 2011 release, *Lucky Fish*, the hard-boiled bard has become a writer worth watching—and reading. The literary community agrees. Nezhukumatathil's long list of professional achievements includes a Pushcart Prize and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. Known for accessible, straightforward verse informed by her Indian, African, and American backgrounds, Nezhukumatathil poem poems that take readers from remote and obscure to love and loss.

JUN 11 | WORDS

AIMEE NEZHUKUMATATHIL

Thursday, June 11, 8-9 p.m., at Lewis Academic, Vermont College Center in Johnson, P.O. Box 2227, vermontcollegecenter.org

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SCIENCE HISTORY TOUR: See PG 10

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calendar

MON. 12.16.17

boards

CREATING WRITING WORKSHOPS: See 16C12
VETERAN'S BOOK CLUB: These authors include the U.S. military service, 2014 Pulitzer Prize winner and a 1968 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. South Burlington Veterans Center, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. veteranscenter.org. Info: 862-5959

TUE. 16

comedy

CAROL TAYLOR: See 16B4. 12, Lebanon Opera House. 8 p.m. 7-8:30 p.m. Info: 451-660-1495, 664-6442

community

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE NIGHT: On our City website discuss ways to create a safe, drug-free Vermont, save lives! 12-1:30 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m. Info: 862-5959, 664-6442
COMMUNITY DIALOGUE NIGHT: On our City website discuss ways to create a safe, drug-free Vermont, save lives! 12-1:30 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m. Info: 862-5959, 664-6442

PLANT TOGETHER ON FRUIT TROUSERS: See 16C12
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film

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: THE MOVIE (1999) A heartwarming comedy about a group of men who have been in the military for 25 years and are now in their 60s. Info: 862-5959, 664-6442

food & drink

PALESTINE FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL: See 16C12
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outdoors

NEW HOOK-UP This group is hard at work on becoming members of the Connecticut Chapter of America's Wilderness to enhance personal and nature service providing. Registration starts last Sunday, August 5th, 9-11 p.m. Free. Info: 203-2282

indoors

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books

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theater

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movies

BOOK GROUPS: READING CHALLENGE Challenge for seniors and adults as presented by the 1942 Award for Best. Montpelier-Hartford Library, Montpelier, 7:30 p.m. Info: 223-2580

BUFFET: BURGERS, BEER, AND BURGERS, A COLORED DETECTION A delicious meal of burgers, beer, and burgers. 1942 Award for Best. Montpelier-Hartford Library, Montpelier, 7:30 p.m. Info: 223-2580

WED. 17

activities

THE NEW JUNE CROWD 10:00-11:00 a.m. Info: 223-2580

community

INTRODUCTION TO HORTICULTURE A series of 10 sessions on the horticulture. 10:00-11:00 a.m. Info: 223-2580

PEER SUPPORT GROUP Info: 223-2580

conferences

AMERICAN'S SYSTEMS SUMMIT See THU 16, 7:30 a.m. p.m.

dance

WOLFE IN HIP-HOP DANCE See THU 16

THEMATIC AND THEMATIC See THU 16

etc.

CONTEMPORARY DANCE & FITNESS STUDIO A series of 10 sessions on the contemporary dance & fitness studio. 10:00-11:00 a.m. Info: 223-2580

TECHNIQUE MEETING See THU 16

VALLEY NIGHT FEATURING THREE WOMEN COLLEGE Local artists for the evening of the night. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Info: 223-2580

food & drink

SHAWNEE RIVERS MARKET See THU 16

COFFEE TASTING See THU 16

WORLD HISTORY TOUR See THU 16

MIDDLEBURY FARMERS MARKET See THU 16

WINTER FARMERS MARKET See THU 16

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Together Again

Sneakers Jazz Band reunite, rerelease old album

BY RYAN DE SEIFE

Vermont's venerable *Sneakers Jazz Band* are currently having a moment. They are rereleasing their out-and-only album, *Live at White Crow*, originally issued on cassette in 1989. And the musicians are reuniting to perform two shows at Club Monaco this Sunday, June 14, the last night of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival. Not bad for a group that last played together a dozen years ago.

Only a modest number of *Live at White Crow* cassette were ever sold, mostly at the band's Tuesday-night gigs at the ramshackle Winslow night club from 1986 to 1996. SJB never recorded another album. Their sole release wasn't exactly forgotten, but it did slip through the cracks. Until last summer, when former record producer and *White Crow* Audio owner Todd Lockwood started sifting through his boxes of old master tapes.

It was during the seventh RDPF that Lockwood recorded *Sneakers Jazz Band* live in the studio at White Crow. The band rose through two back-to-back sets in a single day, according to Lockwood. Unusually, about 30 of the band's devoted fans joined the musicians in the studio. Their cheering and clapping, clearly audible on the recording, contributes to the album's beguiling feel. It's dedicated to John Gorman, then-owner of *Sneakers* restaurant and the guy who suggested the Tuesday series in the first place.

Another of Lockwood's release projects recently made national headlines. Back in 1987, *Bernie Stuenkel*, then mayor of Burlington, and a chorus of local singers released a cassette recording of traditional folk and protest songs. We still *Don't Know*. After it was featured on *Seven Days'* *Weekend*-centered mini-site *Bernie Back*, it went viral, and was rereleased



Left to right: Dave Crooks, Ross Bengegan, and Jerry Stuenkel

on television programs from Fox News to "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart." Lockwood subsequently rereleased the album on CD.

Should *Sneakers* win its long-shot bid for the Oval Office, the members of the *Sneakers Jazz Band* would be able to claim that they had been labeled racist by the president. Both albums were initially released on Lockwood's now-defunct Burlington Recordings.

"There are aspects of the *Bernie* album that just sound totally cool now," says Lockwood in a phone interview. "I could almost see them taking an some sort of cult status online." *Actually*, they already have.

"The *Sneakers* project was a little less unusual, but it's a really solid performance, and with studio sound," he continues. "The fact that there was an audience there had the band pumped up more than they would have been otherwise. I'm quite pleased with what we ended up with."

Chuck Ellet, owner of Charles Ellet Studios in Charlotte (and a "winter studio" in Mexico), has been a vital part

of the Burlington music scene — as a keyboardist, recording engineer and producer — for more than 30 years. He praised the musicianship and dedication of the SJB members, who each earned just \$12 per Tuesday night gig.

"Sometimes, receiving money from the equation is a very pure and honest thing to do," says Ellet. "It makes it more fun than thinking of it as work. I think that was what ultimately makes [the band] so special. People were just doing it because they wanted to, and everybody was really committed to it."

Over coffee at Burlington's Muddy Waters, guitarist Paul Abell and bassist Clyde Stutz consider the unlikely revival of the band and its album, and remember the recording session with fondness.

"It felt like a gig with a small but extremely enthusiastic group of people who managed to elbow their way into the theater," recalls Abell. "We knew that the buzz would be playing for real people who were going to get pumped [on the recording]" he adds.

"When I listen to it again, I hear the energy," says Stutz. "Those are young



Sneakers Jazz Band



Paul Abell

guys just getting up there and going for it. The energy of the playing is very robust and aggressive."

Stutz adds that he's equally struck by the tightness of the band's performance. "You can hear that these are people who played this stuff week in, week out; month in, month out, and really got to know each others' playing," he says.

Those young guys also included Dave Grippo (alto sax), Russ Remington (drum), Jeff Schaubert (drums), Bruce Sklar (saxophone) and Jerry Stuenkel (trumpet). All will be present for the RDPF DVD.

Stutz and Abell agree that the CD's track listing generally reflects a typical *Sneakers Jazz Band* set from the late '80s. The band approaches such standards as Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee" and Duke Ellington, Irving Mills and

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Jeff Sweeney



Fred Abbott

like that," says Abbott. "But he did want them to have that language at their disposal. They were there a lot."

Anastasio, who had taken guitar lessons from Abbott, would eventually sit in with the band on nights when his former teacher couldn't make it.

Despite the instant admiration of each fan, Sweeney Jazz Band just sort of disappeared in 1996. No "breaking up" was involved, says Abbott. That's the kind of thing rock bands do, he suggests.

"[They] get together, they do tours, they look up and then they never talk to each other for 15 years," Abbott goes on. "And then they have this tearful reunion. Jazz groups don't work like that."

Some members of SJH continued to perform with one another in other musical permutations, including Milwaukee's Grappa Punk Band and the Unknown Blues Band.

Neither Abbott nor Stern stops their reunion to be fearful. On the contrary, they're both excited to play with their former bandmates, a couple of whom have moved from the area. Somerville is an accomplished trumpet player in Atlanta whose past SJH credits include appearing as a Grammy-nominated band. And award-winning albums with Cirque du Soleil, he has also performed and recorded with Phish. Rasmussen is now based in Austin and has toured and recorded with the Trey Anastasio Band.

Stern, still active musically and now a lecturer in the University of Vermont music department, says he's been playing along with the CD in absence of the band's shows.

"It's just remembering the good feeling playing that material, the excitement about avoiding it, the risk of the band onstage, the tapeplay that went on there," he says. "It's gonna be nice!" ☺

Contact: stbern@everdaynet.com

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AND GOING FOR IT.**

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Together Again new

Just Tim's timeless "Carmen" with the same youthful nerve as they do their originals, such as Somerville's "Lush" and Abbott's "Blue Lunch."

Among these soaking up the band's improvisational energy at Sweeney's were some college kids who would go on to become Vermont's most famous musical sons. All four members of Phish frequented the restaurant on Tuesday evenings, none more diligently than guitarist/vocalist Trey Anastasio, according to the band.

Abbott and Stern acknowledge that SJH might have exerted some influence on the jam-band genre, but they hardly chalk it up to the era's burgeoning local jazz scene in general.

"[Anastasio] obviously didn't want [Phish] to be a backup group or anything

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REVIEW *this*

Hungrytown, Further West

(SELF-RELEASED DIGITAL DOWNLOAD)

Further West, the newly released third album from West Texas-based Hungrytown, evokes the glory-olde of the open road. There's always a true in the album's title, and it made equally clear in the record's cover art: the band name and album title are superimposed on a highway sign. The image is blurry, with tallgrass sways speeding under as a horizon. As if the shot was taken from behind a dashboard. Travel — especially of the western variety — has been a staple of the American Songbook, and the American Experience in general, for generations. But on Further West, the husband-and-wife duo of Rebecca Hall and Kim Anderson put their own distinctive spin on timeless American romance.

Perhaps the most vivid and telling example of this comes by way of one of the few non-original songs on the



second, Wanda Garcia's "Tombas on a Fleety" placed smack in the middle of the album, the tune is a literal and figurative centerpiece. But it's not simply that Hall and Anderson cover the famous song. It's how Hungrytown's version is in a cappella duet that imbues Garcia's ode to migration and the nobility of laboring with solemn reverence. Garcia wrote the song in 1942, but Hall and Anderson make it sound much older, brooding even, harking to the song's British Isles roots. (Garcia based his melody on a traditional British folk song called "Pretty Polly.")

Synthesizing and updating folk tradition is a Hungrytown hallmark that dates back to their 2007 self-titled debut, continues through to their 2011 follow-up *Any Forgotten Thing*, and is even more fully honed on Further West. Sweet and melancholy, the opening title track plays

like observations of a passing landscape as seen through a rain-flecked passenger window. Spurred on by plucky banjo and guitar, Laura Schuchman's fiery fiddle, "Hired Way to Love" is driving Americana by way of Celtic folk. The brooding "Don't You Let Me Down" is sort of the inverse. Celtic folk shaded with Appalachian touches.

Hall's thoughtful lyricism and gentle melodic phrasing characterize Hungrytown's material. But multi-instrumentalist Anderson is the key to the duo's unique synchronicity. For example, he turns the fairly straightforward "Highway Song" into something more profound, decorating Hall's nostalgic melody with dreamy accents of clanging guitar and organ. Recurring moments such as this make Further West Hungrytown's most affecting album to date.

Further West by Hungrytown is available at hungrytown.net.

DAN ROLLES

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The Movies, Wanna

(SELF-RELEASED DIGITAL DOWNLOAD)

So long, Will Cullen. We hardly knew ya. Cullen is a Midwestern College grad whose band, the Wannas, were fairly popular among the Midland R&Bers. Up north in Burlington, we never heard much from that trio while they were active, and it's unlikely that we will in the future. Degree in hand, Cullen recently moved to Chicago. But before he left, the Wannas recorded and released one record, *Wanna*. And of the eight songs therein are my inclination. We've all been missing out.

The record opens on a punchy slice of garage rock with DNA that seems equal parts Clap Your Wings Say Yeah and very early Spinal Tap. Cullen sings with a nasal whine reminiscent of CUBBY. Also noteworthy: that the song's lyrics, despite fraternal roots, A Series of Unfortunate Events. That's a good catch.

"Candy's Home" reveals a melodic punk beat that seems at last 1970s-early 1980s (think Canada). It's brash and snarling but eminently catchy.

Next up is a cover of Big Star's "The One." Taking on the Alex Chilton



classic implies serious stones, everyone from Elliott Smith to Jeff Tweedy has covered the song brilliantly. And the original is precisely perfect as it is bitonewest belted that captures the thrill and innocence of teenage love like no other. With a rugged delivery and jagged guitar jangle, Cullen more than does it justice. His sounds like a leech had walled away on his kinder Stent in his parents' garage, which is just about right. "Someone" is the most ambitious cut of the bunch. It's a wondrous, wondrous slow burn that summons with brooding tension punctuated by shades of shimmering guitar. "Be Fools Good" continues the downward slide as Cullen muses on the small pleasures of a quiet smoke, a new back and, ultimately, a warm glow.

"Running" is dynamic garage with a sophisticated edge. The song vacillates between restrained verse and bombastic choruses before receding into a pensive guitar bridge. Then it explodes, unleashing that tension with a bombastic finish.

Get *Kidnapped*? is a seemingly accurate non-benefit analysis of higher education — undeniably apropos to students at an elite liberal arts school — that again highlights CUBBY.

Wanna closes on the semi-sister "I Wanna Fall." Here, Cullen pines for an all-consuming love — perhaps the kind of love you only truly experience when you're, a.k.a. IFT-I wanna land on my feet with you in my heart. / I wanna fly on the street, you in the backseat / make me focus in the street? he sings. He's not laughing but pined with his hopefulness. Then, "I wanna stand in the hall with you / back to the wall with you and know / all that it takes is to come a little closer." It's a beautiful close to a stirring record. Don't be surprised, Will.

Wanna by the Wannas is available at themidwestbandcamp.com.

DAN ROLLES

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All Together Now

Collective – the art of craft, Woodstock

BY MEG BRAZILL

If artists agree on one thing, it's that making a living as an artisan is tough. But they may differ on how to go about it. One artisan relies heavily on juried shows around the country, another hopes that regional fairs and open studio weekends will add up. Others go the gallery-consignment route, or bank on internet sales.

Then there's the strategy of a small group of artists in Woodstock who, nine years ago, decided to join forces and open their own gallery. For each of them, the venue has become an important part of the solution to an artist's financial constraints.

Collective – the art of craft as a co-operatively run gallery in Woodstock, owned and operated by a dozen artisans. In its current configuration, the group consists of six managing members and six general members, all of whom live in the area, working in various art forms. The managing members are woodworker Lynn Adams, jeweler Dorenda Donnelly, wearable-art maker Marcus Hammond, glassblower Nicholas Kelic, and potters Katherine Myers and Nicholas Seiden. The general members are woodworker Scott Duffy, Chris Satom of Kingsfisher Forge, fiber Deborah Ellis, photographer Natsu Fuji, fiber artist Rachel Kahan, and (together) Treney Robb and Bob Michael of High Knees Lighting.

Operating a gallery takes planning and imagination, along with skills in design, display, sales, marketing, book-keeping and a host of other activities. Perhaps most of all, it requires commitment. Collective's members all contribute time to working in the shop, and each managing member has additional responsibilities.

In 2006, Collective set up a 900-square-foot retail shop in an old stone mill building on the Hudson Brook in downtown Woodstock. It's believed to be the town's first industrial building, originally used to mill hair into lustrous oil.

The beautiful, historic structure itself attracts visitors. People strolling along Central Street often stop at the stone bridge to look out over the brook or sit at a picnic table in nearby Tupper Park. From either vantage point, the gallery is directly in front of them. Visitors who



Collective: the art of craft in Woodstock

wander inside immediately perceive the quality of the work. Collective's members are seasoned professional artists who have honed their skills over decades. Many have won awards and been juried into highly competitive and prestigious shows including those produced by the American Craft Council.

Hammond, a fourth-generation clothing designer, initiated the artist collective in 2004. "It wasn't hard to put together, because I had worked in a few shops," she says. "I understood how they worked and how good the dynamic of that structure is."

One of those shops, the Christmas Store in Cambridge, Mass., was a pop-up Christmas shop that lasted for 20 seasons. In Quebec, Hammond was involved in *Minerva: A Guild of Artists* for about five years. "I probably had 15 years of experience working with other artisans and making a store," she says.

Hammond's area of expertise is hand-woven wearables – mostly in rayon, chambray and cotton – and dyed-silk garments and scarves. She often refers to her weaving as "painting with fibers," and to the garments she creates as "houseworn comfort." "I became a single mother 30 years ago, and I had to make a living," explains Hammond, who's been selling her work at outdoor shows for decades. After trying some Vermont shows, she was juried into larger exhibits and "subsequently got to know really fine craft," she says.

In 2004, Hammond's eye for sophisticated design and quality workmanship drew her to other artists, and she began planning a new cooperative. It took two years to gather the original members and find a space.

"I think part of our success is the structure," offers Donnelly. "We don't have a huge membership. We do spend

a lot of time trying to figure it all out. There's a lot that goes into running the gallery."

Kelic, a third-generation glass artist, agrees. "I think the strength of our group may be our size, having a common vision and putting the artist first," he says. "We're trying to retain as much as we can for the artist. To be able to split the next 12 ways is a business model that's more sustainable."

The co-op's financial model is complicated, but the idea is simple: Invest more time, take on more individual responsibility and retain a greater percentage of the sales of your work. At commercial galleries, artists typically earn 30 to 35 percent of a sale. At Collective, they earn 72.5 to 82.5 percent.

"It's a unique space," Kelic says. "It's a bit of a different retail experience than a typical craft gallery. You can meet a different maker every day."

LYNN CAMPBELL "Life's Fables & Color Studies" is a bold, vibrant print featuring swirling colors, organic shapes and patterns, emotional and surreal landscapes and scenes. Through June 30 info: www.lynnart.com. The gallery at Main Street Landing in Hudson.

Vermont Studio Center Showcase

Seven artists who have participated in the staff artists' program at VSC within the past 10 years are featured in an exhibit at Studio Place Arts in Barre, through July 11. Tereza Klemencova, John Nasonova, Katherine Ramnana, Austin Patafale, Kathryn Linn, Annie Jacobs and Emma Baker show works in a variety of mediums on the Main Floor Gallery. Also on view are Lynn Lou Nordstrom prints on the Second Floor Gallery and paper sculpture by Lisa Brecht, Third Floor Gallery. A reception on Friday, June 12, 9:00-5:00 p.m., encompasses all three exhibits, as well as the unveiling of two new public sculpture outdoors by Sam Williams and Gargio Wickscheider. **Reception: "Pole II" by Patafale**



STOW/PLACIDE AREA SHOWS & POET

WINTER WORKS: Contemporary paintings and multi-media sculpting featured in a new sculpture installation by Anna Harris, Joyce Feltus, Janet Pedersen, Annmarie Johnson/Langston Reid Stearn and Kathryn Lipke. Through July 30. Info: 800-550-7890. Stow Arts Institute/Arts

SUPPLY LIST: Thirty-five large occasioned artwork and sculpture with a spirit of whimsicality in a studio exhibit in Vermont's Islands. Through October 27. Info: 252-5371. Vermont Is. Arts and Sculpture Museum in Stowe

WISLEY GALLERY: "Face and Whence" a collection of water paintings. Not to be missed the all day 10AM-6PM artist reception with some artists not evened out. Through June 30. Info: 253-7800. Seven Islands Fine Art Gallery in Colchester

AND RIVER VALLEY/CONTERBURY

ARIEL STONEMAN: Paintings done in nature and sculptures that pay to the theme of nature's both physical and emotional. Through June 13. Info: 244-1523. Aaron's Gallery in Woodbury in Woodbury

"THE CATHARTIC": Thirty three members of the Valley Arts Foundation exhibit a variety of media and sculpture. Through June 22. Info: 244-6561. Woodbury Fine Art Gallery in Woodbury

REALLY TONY: The Art of Living: An exhibition of abstract works from nature and a variety of media. Through the Gallery of the artist. Reception: Sunday June 11. Info: 244-6561. Woodbury Fine Art Gallery in Woodbury

YOUNG CRAWFORD: Abstract and contemporary sculpture by one of the region's. Through July 12. Info: 244-6561. Woodbury Fine Art Gallery in Woodbury

MIDDLEBURY AREA

"EMERSON": (Emerging) an exhibition of painting. Peter 1911, pottery, glass and sculpture by 19 artists. It's exploring the themes of living life and change. Through June 30. **SAVANNAH:** Vermont landscapes in oil, acrylic and mixed. Through September 30. Info: 251-6751. Creative Space (Savannah Vermont)

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

JOHN J. JACOBSON: Photography. Through June 11. Info: 252-5371. Jackson/Arts Center in Middlebury

PORTLAND, ME

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TOM CASHEN: Thirty-eight by the renowned. Through June 11. Info: 252-5371. Jackson/Arts Center in Middlebury

WILSON WHEELER: Thirty-eight by the renowned. Through June 11. Info: 252-5371. Jackson/Arts Center in Middlebury

WILLIAM RICHMOND: Thirty-eight by the renowned. Through June 11. Info: 252-5371. Jackson/Arts Center in Middlebury

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NEW IN THEATERS

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LOVE IS BLIND (TV) Beyond the fourth party, the show's new season is a different stage of the relationship. The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship. The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship.

THE SCOTT TERRY (TV) The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship. The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship.

NOW PLAYING

THE SCOTT TERRY (TV) The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship. The show's new season, which explores the show's new season, is a different stage of the relationship.

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ratings

★ = highly praised
★★ = excellent, but not perfect
★★★ = solid, but not perfect
★★★★ = excellent, but not perfect
★★★★★ = perfect

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San Antonio

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Friday 10 — Saturday 10

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Endless

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San Antonio (PG-13)

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Wednesday 10 — Thursday 11

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MOVIES TO WATCH

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY Clint Eastwood's western masterpiece of the 1960s is back on the big screen in a new edition. The film is a classic of the genre, with Eastwood playing a disillusioned mercenary who, along with a like-minded partner, is hired to lead the imprisoned prisoner in the film, James Coburn, and his partner, Lee Remick, to the town of San Juan. (PG-13)

NEW ON VIDEO

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OFFBEAT FLICK OF THE WEEK

BY HANCOCK HARRISON

Headline

If you liked *Michael's Schenker* playing Ceryn Hughes's funky new album in the film *The Living Dead*, you may want to check out *Michael's Schenker* playing Ceryn Hughes's funky new album in the film *The Living Dead*. (PG-13)



Offbeat Flick of the Week: A film that's been on the air for a long time, but it's still a great one. It's a classic of the genre, with Eastwood playing a disillusioned mercenary who, along with a like-minded partner, is hired to lead the imprisoned prisoner in the film, James Coburn, and his partner, Lee Remick, to the town of San Juan. (PG-13)

WHAT I'M WATCHING

BY ETHAN DE SOUSA

This week I'm watching *Michael's Schenker*

Michael's Schenker's 1988 film *Michael's Schenker* is a classic of the genre, with Eastwood playing a disillusioned mercenary who, along with a like-minded partner, is hired to lead the imprisoned prisoner in the film, James Coburn, and his partner, Lee Remick, to the town of San Juan. (PG-13)



One series of films, a professor of film studies, I have a great one to recommend to you. It's a classic of the genre, with Eastwood playing a disillusioned mercenary who, along with a like-minded partner, is hired to lead the imprisoned prisoner in the film, James Coburn, and his partner, Lee Remick, to the town of San Juan. (PG-13)

Watch this series, published every Tuesday on the website, I have a great one to recommend to you. It's a classic of the genre, with Eastwood playing a disillusioned mercenary who, along with a like-minded partner, is hired to lead the imprisoned prisoner in the film, James Coburn, and his partner, Lee Remick, to the town of San Juan. (PG-13)

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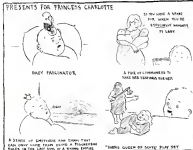
DAVE LAPP



EDIE EVERETTE



LULU EIGHTBALL



MICHAEL DEFORGE



MORE FUN!
STRAIGHT DOPE (P.30)
CROSSWORD (P.C-5)
CALCULU & SUDOKU (P.C-7)

JEN SORESEN

FAST TRACK TO OLIGARCHY

WHY IS MYRAH OUTRAGED BY A CORPORATE GIVEAWAY PRIZE AS A "TRADE DEAL?"



WHY HE WANTS TO LEGACY TO BE COMPLEX?



WHY THE ONLY PRINCE AND PRINCE TRAINER FOR A HEADLINE?



WHY THE PRINCE HAS ALREADY BEEN PRINCE BY SECRET TRIBUNAL



HARRY BLISS

**Curses, Follies Again**

Police in Virginia Beach, Va., identified Dorothy Annato Alonzo, 33, as their bank robbery suspect after he posted videos on social media showing the teller stuffing money into his bag and a picture of a note asking for \$100,000 (but adding "please"). Alonzo insisted that posting the video proved it wasn't robbery. "I don't think I would violate it, post the picture of the letter and do that all to come back," he said, adding, "There are a lot of things on my Instagram that have nothing to do with what happened." (Providence) **HAVVTV**

Deputies investigating the theft of a cash register at the Backlot Burger restaurant in Mount Morris, N.Y., said they caught up with suspects Matthew J. Anselmi, 34, James P. Mordica, 36, and Timothy S. Walker Jr., 33, by following "a steady trail of more than 100" (Providence) **HAVVTV**

After the suspect's arrest, the restaurant posted a sign claiming a hit. "The last burger and one small north ending for" (Rockstar) **Democrat & Chronicle** and **WGLM-TV**

Digital Follies

Crashdowns have shorter attention spans than publicists, down to the widespread use of mobile digital devices. Microsoft Corp. researchers, who reviewed surveys of more than 2,000 Canadians, determined that attention spans have fallen from an average of 12 seconds in 2000 to eight seconds today. They noted that publicists average a nine-second attention span. (Ottawa Citizen)

Slightest Provocation

Thirty people were asked to react to an American's last video clip in Miami County, Ohio, after a disagreement over the waffle maker in the buffet style breakfast area. "It sounded like one lady yelled up and asked the other lady if she was in line for the waffle maker," Sheriff Kim Cole said. "She didn't answer, so she lady started to make her waffle. The other confronted her and said, 'That was my waffle,' and the other lady said, 'No, it's mine,' and then it went a downhill from there." Cole said that deputies arrived to find "a large group of people yelling over the waffle maker" and a lot of yelling and screaming, but no one was arrested. (OH.com)

Authorities blamed the shooting death of a 18-year-old college student on a dispute over the rules of a home-party game. Police said Ronald McNeil, 38, and others started a graduation party in College Station, Texas, started until they eventually came to blows. The host asked McNeil to leave. He did but returned with a handgun and fired 15 times. He told police he intended only to scare the guests, but his gunshot injured two and killed the 18-year-old, a bystander. (Houston Chronicle)

Aroma Therapy

American law enforcement agencies seeking ways to dispense stress without killing or injuring them are considering importing a chemical product that Israeli police units "preventives establish to protect and security personnel." Called Stress, it smells like new sewage mixed with potpourri.com's candles. Israeli soldiers mysteriously spray Stress from water cannons at Palestinian protesters. The mixture of stress and security is new tactic, according to its manufacturers, protects against cholera, and the only reported side effect is difficulty getting the stress out of clothing and off bodies. (Ottawa)

"SHE SAID, 'THAT WAS MY WAFFLE,' AND THE OTHER LADY SAID, 'NO, IT'S MINE,' AND THEN IT WENT DOWNHILL FROM THERE."

When Tupperware Parties Aren't Enough

While Lucy Fildes served as acting director of the Veterans Affairs office in Phoenix, she "sounded like a lady" to come for her subordinates to attend a party at her house and pay for parking afterwards by the wife of a VA colleague, according to the agency's inspector general. Fildes's email contained the wife's "who pays for the more." The "Angel Waffle" party will be charged \$10 for parking to make it "talk to local people." Federal investigators who interviewed all the employees who attended said that most seemed unimpressed by the experience. (Washington Post)

About Those Batteries You Bought

Among the assets for sale as part of the Dollar's bankruptcy are customer data that the retailer collected over decades. The records include names, email addresses and phone numbers for 10 million people. (Hooper & Lyndall General, which bought 12.7 million batteries, says it was released with speed in the leading battle for the customer data. (Washington Post)

WOLF BLUMENBERG

ILLUSTRATION

TIMOTHY WARD

WOLF BLUMENBERG

HOLKERS

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WOMEN seeking?

EXPERIENCE WITH MEN OF COLOR

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LOOKING FOR A SILENT LOVER

Hi! I'm a 25-year-old female who is looking for a silent lover. I am a mix of a girl at an elite school who went to college and my sexuality. I am eager to help you learn, enjoy all you want and learning. I am OCB. I am a mix of a girl at an elite school who went to college and my sexuality. I am eager to help you learn, enjoy all you want and learning. I am OCB.

PLAYFUL, GROOMING AND SHAGGING

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BAMBOON AND BUNNY BOOTS GUSTIE

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SEEKING MEN BUT NOT THE

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CLEANER, CIRCULOUS, ADVENTURE

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MEN SEEKING?

PROBABLY REALITY

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SHARPTAIL

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LAID BACK, SAVORING, SENSUAL

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LEGITIMITY AND PROBABLY

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AROUND THE WORLD ALL PROBABLY

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GRAB YOUR OWN

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LOOKING FOR FUN

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PILERS OF PROBABLY

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LOOKING FOR MY HAPPY HEALTHY FUN

Hi! I'm a 25-year-old male who is looking for a silent lover. I am a mix of a girl at an elite school who went to college and my sexuality. I am eager to help you learn, enjoy all you want and learning. I am OCB. I am a mix of a girl at an elite school who went to college and my sexuality. I am eager to help you learn, enjoy all you want and learning. I am OCB.

NEEDS BAD...

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BE CURIOUS AND LOOKING

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CONNECTIONS

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GIRLS SEEKING?

GOING FROM THE FIVE FIVE

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CASUAL TWOLINE

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LOOKING FOR A BIG

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CAF FOR UP

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ADVENTURE COMPLETE NOW TO LOCATE

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BLISSING ROBERTS, KATHERINE

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SEXUAL ADVENTURE WITH SEXY

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PARTIES

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Your wise counselor in
 love, lust and life

ASK ATHENA



Dear Athena,

My best friend just broke up with his girlfriend of a few months. They had this on and off thing for a while. He and I have been friends for more than 10 years and were really close. But I am so into this woman. We've been known for a long time, and she has been in his life for a while. But I am in love with her. I love him more than he does. But he's still single and looks about her sometimes. He has not even I want to be with her. But I'm afraid he'll hate me — like it's not cool to go for her. What should I do?

Sincerely,
 Perplexed About P.

Dear Perplexed,

Life is short, life is change. If you up and tell your friend that you've been pining for his ex and you can't take it anymore. Hopefully he'll be long enough to hear you on the pleasure of his memories, but my friends are pressed that he can't let his heart go. You have a buddy can cheer your friend up. For him in your hands, and it's not only a little like you're standing on a line between your happiness and that of your best pal. But if he's in a confident, mature person and a true friend, he'll back off and understand.

And if it's not, what's the worst that can happen? It may be hard for your friend to let go of this relationship. He may not be immediately ready for his to move on with any new partner. But that's not under his control and if he's really been with the woman, he really can't hold on anymore. And in theory that means you have a shot.

I say "in theory" because do you have room to believe this woman wants you? Or even would he be open to her and let her find him pursuing her? Your letter doesn't seem to consider her feelings. Think about your friend's. Your friend is angry with you, for what you've said, and she expects you. But you'll survive and live. If your friendship is as tight as you suggest, he'll forget this awkward moment in time and stand by you regardless of his response to you. If you're not willing to risk it, you could certainly stay mum and hope that your feelings for this woman eventually fade. But I don't recommend that. You will look forward to her looking the waters with your love interest, and you might even grow bitter toward your ex. Think of the stuff country songs are made of. That's kind of song.

I wish I could tell you what will happen. I know the prospect of being rejected — by either of these people — is scary. But you have to put yourself out there or you'll never know. And not knowing is a lot worse than the "Sory, but I don't think you can get that" that he'll say with your other confusion that should just happen there. With all the ladies either loves and better disappointed.

Yours,
 Athena

Need advice?
 You can send your own question to her at asktheask@sevendaysvt.com



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